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ABSTRACT

This issue of the quarterly Education International focuses on vocational education and training (VET). The editorial, "Education and the Wealth of Nations" (Fred van Leeuwen), focuses on provision of quality education for all. "Education International's (EI's) First Joint Worldwide Action on Education Issues" (Elie Jouen) describes the Global Campaign for Education. "Beijing: Five Years Later" (Marta Scarpato) puts emphasis on the following two major themes in the context of the upcoming revision of the objectives of the World Conference for Women (4th, Beijing, China, 1995): rights of the girl child and problems encountered by women in Eastern European countries. "After Seattle--What Next?" (Sheena Hanley) addresses the need to pay more attention to building the social dimension of the global economy. "And What About Retirement..." (Peter Dawson) looks at pension plans worldwide and the impact of the growing aging population. The section on VET contains these 10 articles: "At the Heart of the Education Reform Process" (Elie Jouen); "VET Worldwide" (Ulf Fredriksson); "On the Agenda of the 88th International Labour Conference"; "Life-Long Learning" (Bob Harris); "Finding a Dynamic Equilibrium" (Yves Baunay); "Knowledge and Skills Will Fuse" (A. Parsuramen); "The 'Dual' German Model" (Ursula Herdt); "Gabon: Education's Neglected Sector" (Emmanuel Obame Ondo); "Australia: A Case of Educational Convergence" (Rex Hewett); "Honduras: Education System To Get Complete Overhaul" (Gloria Marina Chinchilla); and "Child Labor" (Sheena Hanley). "Sierra Leone: Reconstruction Must Begin in Each Area" (Rosslyn Noonan) addresses the challenges facing the education system in the country. "Structural Adjustment and Education Reforms: Ghana as a Case Study" (John Nyoagbe, Alfred Fumador, Ulf Fredriksson) reports the importance of finding a way to finance education. "Chunkyojo: Transition from Opposition Group to Negotiating Union" (Wouter van der Schaaf) describes advances for the education union in South Korea. "Why a Website Is Not an Online Magazine" (Eric Lee) looks at trade union Web sites as they enter their third generation. "Aimee, the Teacher from Tahiti" (Samuel Grumiau) discusses a day in the life of a teacher. (YLB)

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Education International

Quarterly, Vol 6, n°1, March 2000

Education International Magazine

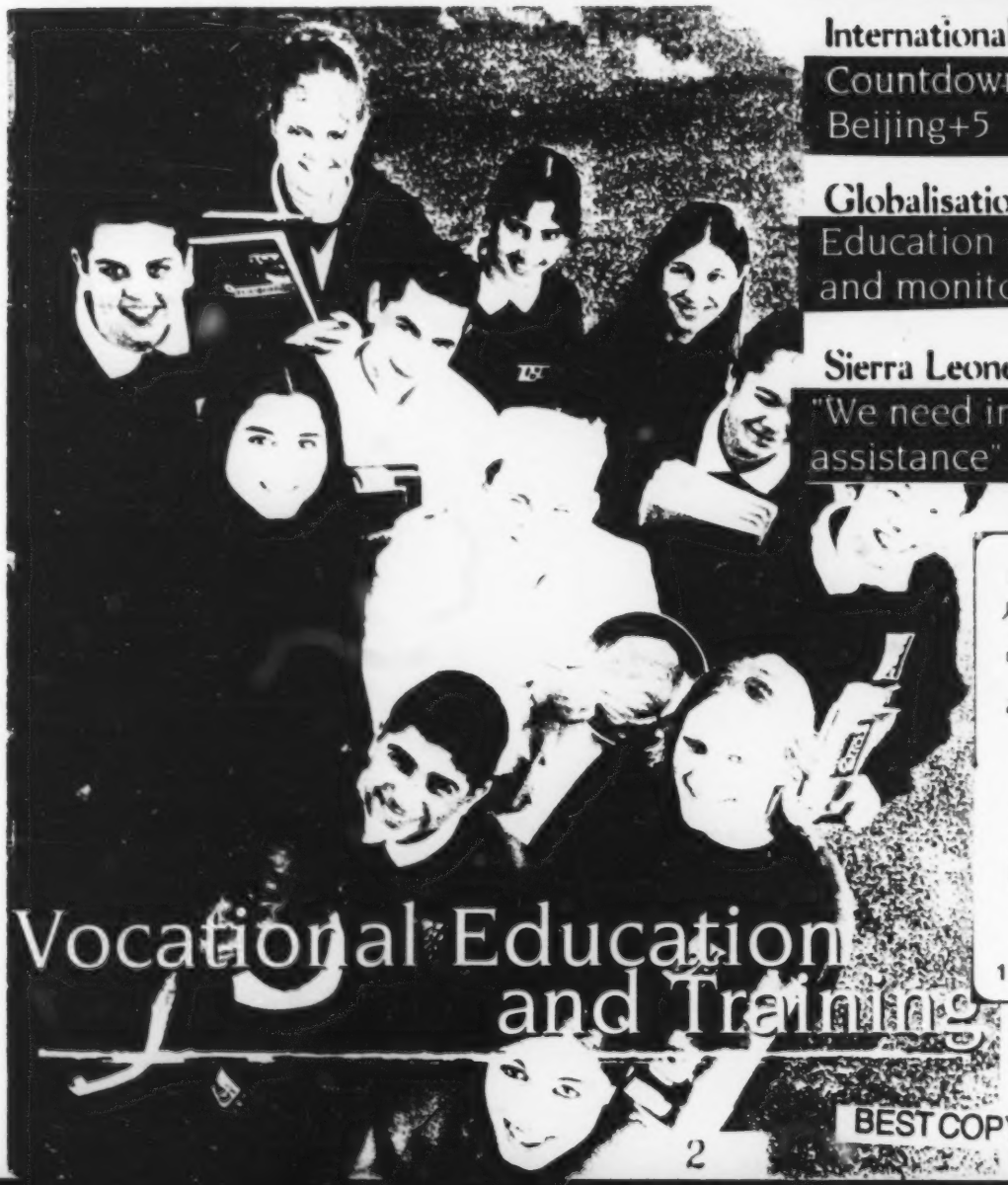
March 2000

Education for All
Civil society flex muscles

International Women's Day
Countdown to Beijing+5

Globalisation
Education unions lobby and monitor

Sierra Leone
"We need immediate assistance"



Vocational Education and Training

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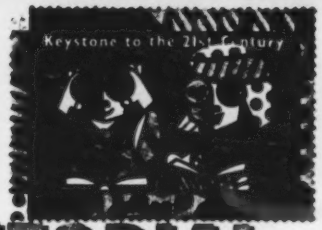
The United Nations' final stamp issue for 1999, Education - Keystone to the 21st Century, drew attention to the fundamental mission of UNESCO and to the importance of education for the future.



CONTENTS

CAMPAIGN 1-2
Global Campaign for Education

8 MARCH 3-4
International Women's Day

GLOBALISATION 5-6
Civil society and the WTO after Seattle

PENSIONS 7-8
Social benefits and declining populations

DOSSIER 9-21
Vocational Education and Training
With contributions from
Mr. Parsuramen, UNESCO Director Division for Renovation of Secondary and Vocational Education; and EI member organisations in Germany, Gabon, Australia and Honduras

SOLIDARITY 22-23
New start for Sierra Leone

REFORM 24-25
Ghana: structural adjustment and education reform

SUCCESS 26
Korea: Chunkyojo, the rising union

ICT 27
Third generation labour websites

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... 28-29
Almée Utia, the Polynesian teacher

EDITORIAL

Education and the Wealth of Nations

All over the world it is taken for granted that educational achievement and economic success are closely linked - that the struggle to raise a nation's living standard is fought first and foremost in the classroom", said a recent article from the magazine The Economist.

Recent developments indicate that private companies and individual investors believe that education can increase their wealth and raise the living standards of stockholders. But their struggle is fought on the marketplace, not in the classroom. Once perceived as a service provided by non-profit institutions, education is increasingly regarded as a profitable industry for investment. This trend can pose a serious threat to public education. It will be one more challenge to be faced.

In the United States the for-profit education business has been evolving for some time with the establishment of the Edison Schools and the University of Phoenix's college for working adults. Michael Milken, the convicted junk bond king, now runs Knowledge Universe, a company whose services range from pre-school to corporate training. He is only one of the investors bringing a flood of dollars into education for profit. Many other investors are following. The figures are astonishing. Currently, Americans spend $700 billion a year on education. Private entrepreneurs, corporations and pension funds see a huge opportunity. They own or operate schools, sell software and textbooks, provide post-graduate training or remedial services. Nothing is out of their reach.

In France, parents are worried about the quality and high cost of private remedial summer schools. In Japan, the *jukus*, or cram schools, are seen by investors as a potentially rewarding investment opportunity, and the market is booming. Business pages of major newspapers around the world now report on education as a commodity.

Warning bells are being sounded however by analysts who say that investors may find that the education business does not open itself to the free market as willingly as did health care, utilities or other industries that once operated as state-provided public services. The International Herald Tribune reported in November 1999: *"Where for-profit enterprises have been introduced in education there is little evidence so far that students are performing better, that high school graduates are getting better jobs or that corporations are teaching skills that benefit the individual as well as the company"*.

At the time, in Seattle at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference, some governments sought to distance themselves from further trade liberalisation in educational services, notably the European Union and Canada. The World Bank, however, reports in its EdInvest News on plans for a series of regional conferences entitled Facilitating Investment in the Global Education Market. Does that mean that developing countries served by the Bank will be subjected to the vagaries of market-driven education, while industrialised countries continue to provide publicly funded education?

Concern is also growing that for-profit education institutions typically seek students that are not costly to educate. *"That's not cheating. Its just playing by the rules of the game"* said Henry Levin, who heads the National Center for the study of Privatisation in Education.

But EI asks: *"Who sets the rules? And What is the game?"*. International organisations are mounting a campaign to promote the right of all children and young people to quality education. Despite the World Bank's latest tilt towards private investment, it is clearer than ever that quality education for all can only be achieved through state provision. The organisation of education systems will be as varied as the populations that make up our nation states. But we insist that in every country education be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to meet the needs of those it serves.

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary

cover: © Andrew Chapman, AEU

EDITOR RESPONSIBLE AT LAW : Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary
EDITORIAL STAFF : Monique Faulhaux, Ulf Fredriksson, Sheena Hanley, Dominique Marlet, Anabel Vallines, Patrice Vézina
ADDRESS : Education International
5, boulevard du Roi Albert II
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 224 06 11
Fax: +32 2 224 06 06
E-mail: educint@ei-ie.org
Internet : http://www.ei-ie.org

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL is the official magazine of Education International (EI). It is published on a quarterly basis in English, French and Spanish.

Established in January 1993, EI has a membership of 296 national unions representing some 23.7 million teachers and workers in education from 153 countries or territories.

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EI's first joint worldwide action on education issues

In all parts of the world it is considered acceptable behaviour to accuse trade unions of corporatism and conservatism. Superficial comments on this sort frequently betoken a misunderstanding of what the education sector is really like, and/or a one-sided view aimed at discrediting trade unions.

Teachers' unions have twin objectives: defending and promoting the professional interests of their members, and fostering the development of quality educational structures for all young people.

The Global Campaign for Education, which has been launched by EI in conjunction with Oxfam International, ActionAid and the Global March against Child Labour, is a perfect illustration of our desire to give direction to the second of the teachers' unions' objectives set out above. By supporting the campaign, teachers show that they are not solely concerned with corporate issues such as terms and conditions of employment, including pay, but that they also want to combine with other partners and help to improve the way that public education systems function.

Improving the operation of education systems

Because of the economic, social, technological and cultural changes taking place in our societies, improvements in course content, in teaching methods and in student evaluation processes have become increasingly important. Yet this urgency is not confined to the education sector: it is also to be found in other productive and service sectors, where it is being addressed by the relevant trade unions.

Two examples will shed light on this urgent need for improvement. The penetration of technology at all levels of our societies, and particularly in the field of employment, has compelled public education systems to incorporate this new factor into both lesson content and teaching practices in order to prepare young people better for adult life. Secondly, the ever-deepening internationalisation of our societies requires that educational approaches be much more inter-cultural if we are to achieve a better understanding between different cultural groups, and thereby reduce the risk of misunderstanding, opposition and potential conflict.

Many unions at both national and international level accept the need for these changes, and, together with other actors in the education system, are frequently at the forefront in the drafting of proposals for reforms of education systems. EI's Global Campaign also incorporates this need for change.

Welcoming and integrating all children

It is generally agreed that not all children have the chance to go to school and pursue their studies for as long as they are able to. This phenomenon is mainly to be found in developing countries which, despite promises made by their governments at the 1990 Jomtien Conference that this dramatic situation would be overturned by the year 2000, still do not manage to educate 125 million children.

However, the problem is also to be found in industrialised countries, where large numbers of young people are unable to study for financial reasons. Creeping privatisation in higher education in some countries and, in recent years, rising tuition fees in state universities restrict their aspirations to pursue their studies.

Quality education: the passport to employment

Qualitative changes in the labour market over the last ten years or so have ensured that only young people and adults with a certain level of education or training are able to enter the new labour market and stay there. The days of Taylorist economics whereby many repetitive jobs were carried out by unskilled young people and adults are numbered, even in developing countries. The new economy requires another kind of worker who has a good understanding of new technology, and who can work in a team, take initiatives, and adapt quickly to changing situations. That is what we have to do to achieve integration.

Public education systems therefore have to re-think their programmes and their teaching methods in order to prepare young people for new situations at the work-

CAMPAÑA MUNDIAL NO POR LA EDUCACIÓN
GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION
CAMPAGNE MONDIALE POUR L'ÉDUCATION

EI has recommended its 295 affiliated organisations to undertake at least one small action, however small. In more demanding situations, this might take the form of a press release, a meeting with the Minister of Education or an article in the trade union press; in more favourable circumstances, it might be possible to organise a colloquium, a meeting or a conference. Affiliates are completely free to do whatever they like, as long as it is something that promotes the idea of education for all.

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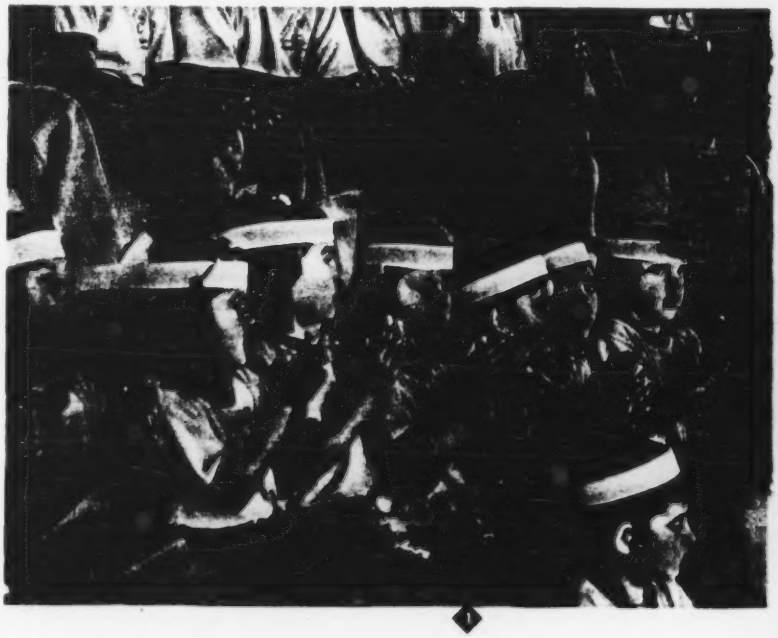

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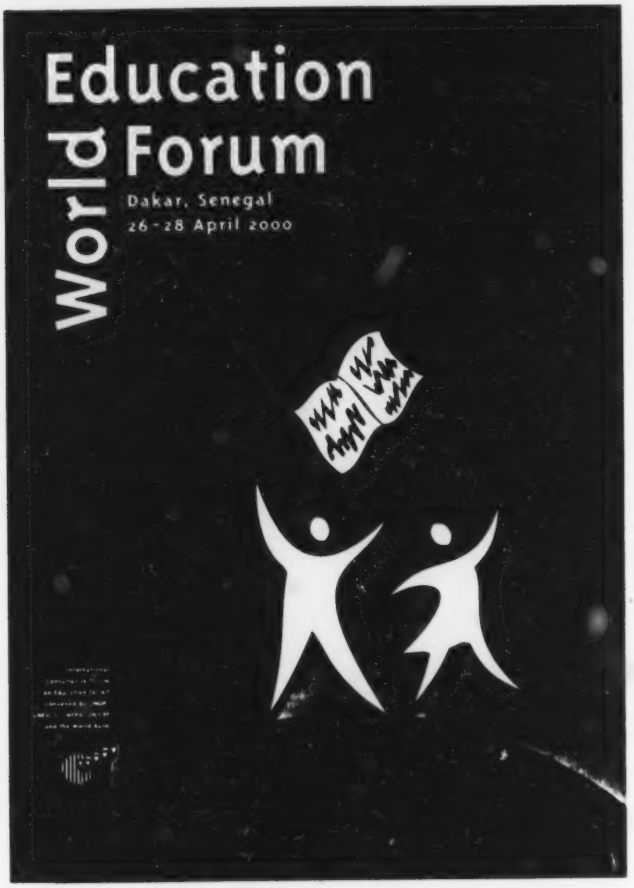
EI's first joint worldwide action on education issues



The "World Education Forum" takes place in Dakar, Senegal, from 26 to 28 April 2000. It is an intergovernmental conference convened by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Bank. The governments of both developing and industrialised nations will review the plans and promises they made ten years ago in Jomtien, Thailand, to ensure basic education for all children by the year 2000.
During the Dakar Forum, EI and its partners will organise and participate in a number of activities which will draw attention to the issue of universal education. These activities will be directed at mobilising the support of civil society and maximising pressure on governments to carry out their undertakings in practice as well as theory.

place. They also need to take on board the need or life-long learning. And that is what we have to do to achieve recognition for public systems of education.

Improving the education system, welcoming all young people, and integrating all young people are the three priority objectives that must be supported by everyone involved in education. The EI world campaign for 'Quality Education for All' that was adopted at the last Congress in Washington embraces all three. They are interdependent and form a coherent whole for our organisation, although the welcoming objective has been put on something of an international footing and prioritised by the forthcoming EFA World Education Forum due to take place in Dakar from 26 to 28 April 2000.

Coming together to persuade others

Education International is clearly representative of all education employees worldwide. Both EI's influence and its capacity for putting forward proposals are widely recognised. However, we want to broaden our audience and our influence by joining forces with other partners who, like us, are aware of the need to put our three objectives into practice. This is the direction taken by the Global Campaign for Education that we have launched in conjunction with Oxfam International, ActionAid, the Global March against Child Labour, and some national NGOs active in the education sector; it will be facing two considerable challenges in the coming weeks.

Elie Jouen
Deputy General Secretary

Together, we have decided to organise a Global Action Week for Education from 3 to 8 April 2000, during which issues relating to education for all will be highlighted. As far as our International is concerned, the recommendation to our 295 affiliated organisations is clear: undertake at least one small action, however small. In more demanding situations, this might take the form of a press release, a meeting with the Minister of Education or an article in the trade union press. In more favourable circumstances, it might be possible to organise a colloquium, a meeting or a conference. Affiliates are completely free to do whatever they like, as long as it is something that promotes the idea of education for all. This is the first time, so far as we are aware, that a professional sector has undertaken action at world level on the initiative of its professional secretariat.

Together, we have also decided to go to Dakar mainly to attend the official World Forum, but also to use the various events that we will be organising there to articulate the demands of the international community of NGOs concerning education for all.

By committing themselves to this action at world level, teachers' unions will show that the accusations of corporatism and conservatism are unfounded and that, together with other actors, they are important agents for change and renewal in the education sector. ◆

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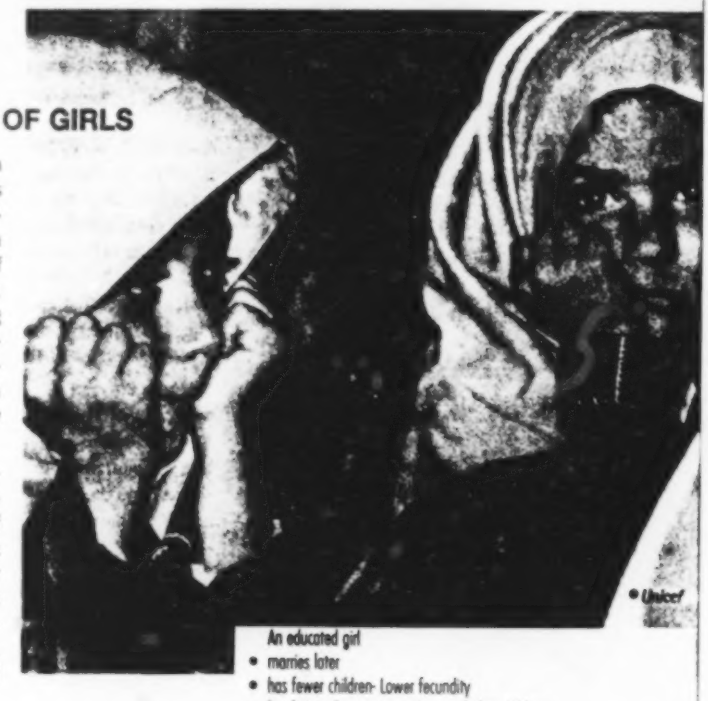
Beijing: five years later

On the occasion of International Women's Day, EI has decided to put emphasis on two major themes in the context of the upcoming revision of the objectives of the World Conference for Women in Beijing. Those themes are the rights of the girl child and the problems encountered by women in Eastern European countries.

The UN General Assembly has convened a Special Session entitled *"Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the XXIst Century"*, to be held in New York from June 5 until June 9, 2000. Its mandate is to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action approved at the IVth World Conference for Women (Beijing, 1995).

The UN has sent a questionnaire to each Member State, asking for information on what still needs to be done in order to comply with the Beijing Platform of Action. From the responses of the governments, a Global Report on the Situation of Women will be prepared. Request a copy of your government's report to the UN and pay special attention to the information concerning the Girl Child.

THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS



UNICEF's 1999 Report on the State of the World's Children states that 130 million children of school age in the developing world, of whom 73 million are girls, grow up without receiving basic education, while millions of other children languish in situations in which they receive poor quality education.

Illiteracy prevents the development of their full potential and the establishment of real gender equality. The lack of access to education for millions of girls weakens democracy and social progress and, by extension, international peace and safety.

In 1998, the Second World Congress of EI adopted an action plan calling for the review of policies and practices, but also activities and publications, to ensure that girls are seen as equally valued as boys.

EI has committed itself to campaigning for the promotion of the education of girls as a human right. EI has also undertaken to encourage the integration of specific courses on the education of girls into teachers' training, both prior to their first day on the job and in the course of their career. ◆

An educated girl

- marries later
- has fewer children- Lower fecundity
- has better chances to survive, as do her children
- has access to better paid jobs
- is more aware of her rights as a woman, worker and mother
- will better contribute to society
- will be a more aware citizen

GENDER EQUALITY IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Since 1989, the collapse of the centralised Eastern European systems has underscored the limits to gender equality in those countries.

The "transition", as it is called, has forced countries in Central and Eastern Europe to move in record time from mainly centralised economies to market economies. In these 27 countries, it has particularly affected 150 million women and 50 million girls.

The drastic and extremely swift reforms of the labour market have caused a generalised drop in salaries, differences in salary scales have increased and unemployment has become a reality. According to the figures published by UNICEF in a recent report[1], it is estimated that, since 1989, twenty-six million jobs have been lost in the region, i.e. 13% of the total num-

The 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform of Action:

1. Poverty
2. Education and Training
3. Health
4. Violence
5. Armed Conflict
6. Economy
7. Decision making
8. Institutional mechanisms
9. Human Rights
10. Media
11. Environment
12. The Girl Child

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Beijing: five years later

How to promote women's rights actively:

- Work with the national union movement and women organisations from civil society in order to have a bigger impact with the authorities and society in general.
- Ensure that topics and actions related to gender equality are incorporated into the programme of your union.
- Promote gender analysis and decision making in your work place and in your union to help resolve problems facing girls and women in education.
- Review educational practices to eliminate attitudes that have a negative effect on girl students and women workers.
- Actively defend the right to education for girls and women from indigenous communities, migrant groups, refugees and ethnic minorities in your country;
- Ask your government to include a teacher union representative in their delegation to the UN review of Beijing +5.

Transition cannot be assessed under only one aspect; it has probably opened up new horizons for women, but at the same time, and for the time being, it confronts them with difficulties and problems they thought they had overcome.

ber of jobs prior to the transition. Available data state that at least 14 million of these jobs were occupied by women. Unemployment rose from almost zero to approximately 10 million. In 1997, six million women were officially registered as unemployed.

The disappearance or privatisation of early childhood services and retirement homes, and the dismantling of state-run medical care systems increase even more the duties of women.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall has also unhinged some long-established myths. Despite existing laws and standards that formally recognised equality, in practice the "unwritten rules" and "glass ceilings" remained. As soon as the formal provisions weakened or disappeared, cultural traditions or practices that had supposedly been overcome reappeared strongly, keeping women in subordinate roles. This tendency is made even worse by the presence, in some countries of the region, of emerging religious and political groups that try to take women back to their traditional roles.

EI's Round Table in Zagreb

With a view to obtaining up-to-date and relevant information on the situation of women teachers and education workers in Eastern and Central European countries, Education International organised in Zagreb (Croatia) a Round Table entitled: "Countries in Transition: the Implications for Equality"[2]. The discussions highlighted the increase in violence against women, as well as the increase of health problems for women teachers, who seem particularly affected by stress, depression and other school-related illnesses linked to difficult working conditions. Such illnesses are seldom recognised as professional illnesses.

Teachers are exposed to growing pressure on schools to cope with the economic crisis affecting most families, the endless succession of education reforms, the lack of a permanent training policy for the teaching personnel, and the obvious difficulties for women to have access to this training when it is available.

The teaching personnel must further learn to cope with the serious consequences of endless armed conflicts in the region (particularly in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia), whose first victims are the civil population in general and women and children in particular. The pupils are traumatised. The increase in child labour in the region (Bulgaria is an example), with consequences such as girls dropping out of school, only adds to the pressure felt by teachers without professional and psychological support to face such problems. ◆

WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN 2000

There are now over 3000 participating groups, including Education International, in the World March and the number of participating countries has risen to 143. In addition, there are 65 national coordinating bodies currently planning March activities at the national level (adoption of national demands, choice of a national slogan to illustrate "2000 good reasons to march," organization of the launch, preparation of popular education activities, coordination of the signature campaign, etc.).

Launches are planned in most of the participating countries. For many, this event will be integrated into their traditional March 8th activities.

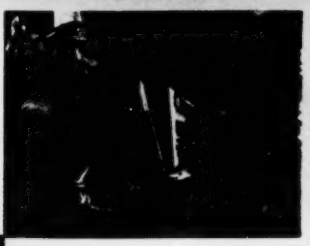
Delegates from the March will rally in New York on October 17, 2000 to meet with the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, and address the UN General Assembly. Requests for meetings will also be sent to the presidents of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. ◆

World March of Women
Tel. +1 514 395 1196
Fax +1 514 395 1224
Marche2000@ffq.qc.ca
http://www.ffq.qc.ca

Marie Scarpato
Equality Coordinator

World March of Women 2000

1 Women in Transition, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Economic and Social Policy Research Programme, September 1999. For information, see the website: www.unicef-icdc.org
2 Zagreb, Croatia, November 1999. EI was represented by Sheena Hanley, Deputy General Secretary, and Marie Scarpato, Equality Coordinator. ILO was represented by Beth Godson, from the ILO office in Budapest. Steven Allen from UNICEF presented the conclusions of the Report "Women in Transition".



After Seattle – What next ?

For some time now unions and NGOs have been warning governments of the risk of upheavals resulting from a breakdown of the balance between economic development, social progress, and political stability. Warnings were also given of the erosion of public support for global markets and institutions, as well as of a loss of faith in the ability of governments to develop programmes and strategies dealing with issues of national concern vis-à-vis global rules.

EI Deputy General Secretary Sheena Hanley headed the EI delegation to the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle.

The uproar in Seattle during the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in December 1999 proved that much more attention needs to be paid to building the social dimension of the global economy. On the economic front, the wave of mega-mergers is on the increase in rich countries. Economic growth remains strong and stock markets are continually setting new records. Without doubt, never has there been such disparity between the economic development of a minority of countries and the increasing impoverishment of a majority of others. The gap in income between the richest 20% of countries and the poorest rose from 30/1 in 1960 to 60/1 in 1990 and 74/1 in 1995.

Disparities exist within countries and between countries and regions. A disturbing number of workers continue to fall below the poverty line, while in the United States the ratio of average Chief Executive Director pay in Fortune 500 companies to the average factory worker has risen from 42/1 in 1980 to 419/1 in 1998.

While all this is happening we are also aware that the five-year review of the Earth Summit showed that the trend towards environmental indicators – soil degradation, freshwater use and greenhouse gas emissions – has worsened.

An HIV/AIDS pandemic has required governments in the poorest countries to find ways of providing drugs for millions of people whose lives will be cut short without the required medicines. Intellectual property rights, enshrined in the Trade and Intellectual Property System (TRIPS) negotiated at the WTO, is seen by many to put drug company profits before public health concerns. Critics have accused the US trade policy of blocking poor countries from manufacturing generic drugs, despite international laws that permit them to do so when facing a public health emergency. Countries, which make generic drugs in emergency situations are required to pay a royalty to the patent holder, but then should be able to negotiate the right to produce the drugs for a ten-year period. Trade sanctions were threatened to make Thailand drop plans to produce a generic anti-AIDS drug, and when South Africa insisted on its right to produce the drugs, it was placed on the "301 watch list", a prelude to sanctions. Pressure in the United States in a pre-election period was sufficient to have South Africa removed from the list.

The list of concerns appears endless. Hormones in food, genetically modified foods, bio-diversity agree-

All EI members must know what their government plans are for education under GATS and build strong coalitions at the national level to ensure that public education is protected at all levels. EI will work to do the same at the international level.

The gap in income between the richest 20% of countries and the poorest rose from 30/1 in 1960 to 60/1 in 1990 and 74/1 in 1995.
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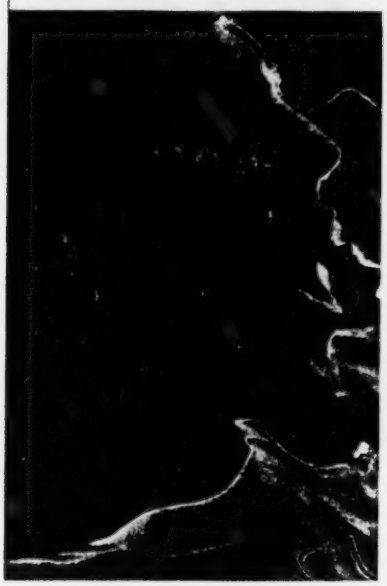
After Seattle – What next ?



Uproar in Seattle during the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in December 1999 proved that much more attention needs to be paid to building the social dimension of the global economy.
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ments, anti-dumping rules, links between trade and labour standards and now the re-opening of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for further negotiations. The World Trade Organisation, the vehicle for the negotiation of the current ground rules that apply to globalisation, has become the target of public anger. Developing countries believe their concerns are not dealt with and industrialised countries have not opened their markets to agricultural products from the third world.

Seattle delivered a strong warning to the WTO

It was for all of these reasons that discussions ended in failure in Seattle. The US Trade Representative announced the 'suspension' rather that the death of the efforts to launch a new round. The positions reached by countries in Seattle were 'frozen', she said. This was immediately disputed by the European Union Commissioner who said that all papers from Seattle were 'dead.' Since Seattle, many meetings have been held between and among governments to decide how they move forward.

What was evident at the WTO Ministerial Conference was that things cannot continue as before.

But what change will we see? Will it be a proliferation of bilateral, multilateral or regional agreements or will the effort be made to change how the WTO operates, to bring it into the light of day, to ensure that the interests of all are taken into account in an holistic manner, and that the club of the rich and powerful, as it is perceived, ceases to be seen as the representative of multinational companies. Perception is important and the WTO has much to do to convince people, particularly the poor, that its decisions will be of benefit to them. So far the poor greet such statements with justified scepticism.

The immediate significance of the failure of Seattle is that international trade and international exchanges continue to grow rapidly. The existing WTO agreements remain in force and support the uneven economic growth. Globalisation has not ended.

The focus of EI

Education International's work at the WTO focused on two main issues:

- the re-opening of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which covers many areas of services including education and healthcare.
- **the inclusion of a working group in the WTO on labour** standards and trade.

Under the existing GATS agreement, the negotiations to further liberalise trade in services begin from January 2000. The framework for the negotiations was to be agreed in Seattle and therefore does not exist. The latest information from the WTO at the time of writing (January 19, 2000) is that no negotiations will proceed at present until agreement is reached on how to proceed. E-commerce is also high on the agenda. At present no schedule has been determined for education. This gives us valuable time to lobby our governments at the national level and to monitor the WTO internationally. It is important to remember that the GATS agreement on education is an ascending agreement and national governments must sign on to open up sectors. It is also important to know that governments can continue to have bilateral, regional or subregional agreements. It is critical that all EI member organisations contact their government to find out what their plans are and what position they hold on re-opening negotiations on liberalisation of education under the GATS.

National and international efforts are necessary to have an impact on the work of the WTO. Developing countries still in the process of building national systems of public education are particularly vulnerable under the GATS. Industrialised countries are keen to export their education programmes, whether they are language or mathematics programmes used by those topping international tests, or to buy into education provided through new technologies by foreign companies. But what are the implications for national development when education provision is from outside the country? Whose norms, values and culture will be reflected?

EI will monitor the work that is taking place at the WTO and will keep member organisations informed of developments. The sharing of information is critical and EI will establish a page on its website incorporating information received from member organisations on a country by country basis. We will ensure that the ICFTU Task Force on Trade and Labour Standards continues to support EI's position on GATS as we support ICFTU's position on trade and labour standards. We will work at the international level with NGOs that believe that education should not be considered a tradable commodity.

Education builds a sense of national identity and, as the International Commission on Education for the 21st century stated: *Choosing a type of education means choosing a type of society. In all countries, such choices call for extensive public debate, based on an accurate evaluation of education systems. The Commission invites the political authorities to encourage such debate, in order to reach a democratic consensus, this being the best route to success for educational strategies.* Such decisions are too important for trade negotiators to take behind closed doors at the WTO. All EI members must know what **their** government's plans are for education under GATS and build strong coalitions at the national level to ensure that public education is protected at all levels. EI will work to do the same at the international level. ◆

Sheena Hunter
Deputy General Secretary

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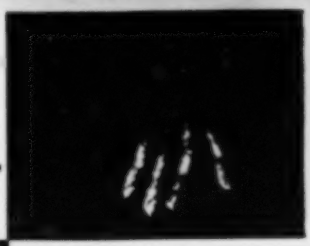
And what about retirement ...



Throughout the world, in the coming century, fewer workers will have to support many more pensioners.
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Strong support for the continuation of an adequate state pension provision for everyone remains a cornerstone of the work of the ICFTU and the ITSs.

Retirement is a subject which can fill a teacher with anticipation or anxiety – or both. Indeed, the loss of income can be very serious.

Of course, there are parts of the world where there is very little organised provision for retirement. However, even in the parts of the world regarded as economically developed, there are wide differences in pension provision related to amount, security of payment and many other concerns. The problems do not only affect teachers, of course, and Education International has been co-operating with other International Trade Secretariats (notably Public Services International) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in a Task Force to examine important aspects of the situation.

In many countries, there will be a pension scheme (often with a title such as "social security") for all the community. This will normally require a deduction from workers' salaries (and often a contribution from the employer as well) and will provide a pension at an age and on a formula based on national legislation. One characteristic to most schemes (though it is now sometimes being questioned) is that the contributions paid by to-day's workers pay for the benefits for today's pensioners (often known as "pay-as-you-go"). The contributions paid by today's workers are not invested to produce for them a tangible source of retirement income in the years ahead. The level of pension is dependent on government decision.

There are strong traditional arguments for such a system, particularly where the scheme is intended to provide the basic income for all retired citizens, to which other forms of income may be added. There are countries, however, where state pension is the predominant or only income in retirement and the possible vulnerability of pension levels to government economies is clear. Add to this the effects of the "population time bomb" – the ageing of the population (see next article). Throughout the world, in the coming century, fewer workers will have to support many more pensioners.

And this brings us to the question of pensions related to work – the education service in the case of EI members. Often (though few things are universally consistent in the world of pensions) the "pay-as-you-go" scheme is implemented. This pension will be related to the length of the worker's career and the salary at or close to retirement.

Many others (particularly in the United States, the Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Singapore, Canada, Malaysia and the United Kingdom) are conducted on a totally different basis. The receipts from the workers and employers are invested in the world-wide stock market, their money is not at the disposal of the government and the size of the pension fund will depend on the success or otherwise of the investments. (There are even examples in a few countries of a hybrid – the money goes into government expenditure, but the accounts of the scheme are kept as though it had been invested in a fund!)

This short description raises numerous questions. The largest funds contain huge sums of workers' money, equivalent to hundreds of billions of US dollars. How much control do representatives of workers, compared to professional investment managers, have in deciding investment policy? – not only the "fiduciary" duty to produce the best financial return, but also ensuring that the money is not used to foster bad environmental and labour practices (even child labour) and anti-trade union policies, perhaps in countries far from that of the workers concerned. The answers at the moment are "very little" and "not enough" and much of the work of the Task Force has been devoted to examining successful initiatives in some countries and devising new strategies, including training of workers' trustees. This

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And what about retirement ...

Peter Dawson
Consultant

work will now come formally under the umbrella of the ICFTU, following the initiative of ICFTU General Secretary Bill Jordan at a Conference on the subject held in Stockholm in November 1999.

Despite the fact that invested pension funds are the norm for trade unionists in many parts of the world, the concept of such market-orientated structures naturally causes disquiet in other traditions and strong support for the continuation of an adequate state pension provision for everyone remains a cornerstone of the work of the ICFTU and the ITSs. The ageing of the population, however, could increase the pressure from workers in some countries to see more of their future pensions in a tangible form and not part of government revenue, competing with the Army or road building when they are pensioners and their children are the workers. If this were to occur, it would be vital to ensure real trade union influence on the administration of the funds and the present work of the international trade union movement would provide a firm basis. ◆

Last May, [illegible] planned to [illegible] the nation's educational [illegible] ... issues pertaining to [illegible] pensions and retirement benefits.

In June 1997, [illegible] Pension Fund [illegible] system, decided [illegible] tobacco stock [illegible] funds to profit [illegible] wealth. PSERS [illegible] state pension [illegible] worth of tobacco [illegible]

President Clinton [illegible] the assets of Washington D[illegible] pension plan to new 100,000 [illegible] teachers. Rather than cutting spending to offset new spending, the US President suggests to 'reform' the district's pension fund so that it no longer invests in stocks and bonds, and gave it the same pay-as-you-go structure as Social Security. The fund contained $4.2 billion in assets.

California Teachers Pension (CalPERS) will acquire 8 community shopping centres in California's major metropolitan cities for $167 million.

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board is responsible for the retirement income of approximately 150,000 elementary and secondary school teachers, 71,000 retired teachers and their survivors, and 90,000 former teachers with entitlements in the plan. It is sponsored by a partnership between the Ontario government and the plan members, who are represented by the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

At the end of 1998, actuarially adjusted net assets were greater than the cost of future pensions, resulting in a $7.7 billion surplus. Approximately 70% of the plan's assets are equity, principally shares in public companies and equity-linked derivative contracts.

Many industrialised countries face declining populations

Industrialised countries will need significant migration streams to maintain the size of their working age populations.
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European countries and Japan would need significant migration streams to maintain the size of their working age populations over the next half-century in the face of predicted population decline and ageing, according to the UN Population Division.

In a preliminary review of a study, Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?[1] to be issued at the end of March 2000, the UN Population Division notes that Italy, for example, would need to add approximately 350,000 migrants per year and Germany, 500,000 per year to keep their working age population (15-64 years) constant at 1995 levels.

Low fertility rates and increased longevity are combining to significantly reduce working populations, both in absolute terms and relatively. Over the next half a century, the share of the population in Japan, 65 years and older, is expected to increase from 15% to 32% as its population falls from 127 million now to a projected 105 million by 2050. In Italy, where the population is predicted to fall from 57 million to 41 million over the same period, the share of those over 65 in the population is expected to rise from 18 to 35%, the study predicts.

In Europe today, there are approximately five persons in the working age group for each person in the retirement age group (65+ years). By 2050, this ratio will decline by more than half. ◆

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[1] The study examines the ageing and population decline in eight countries: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States covering the period from 1995-2050.

At the heart of the education reform process

This particular dossier is being published at the same time that Education International (EI) is organising its first world Round Table on Vocational Education and Training, in accordance with the working program adopted by the World Congress.

In organising this round table and in publishing this dossier, EI is expressing its determination to take an active part in the widespread debate on Vocational Education and Training. EI is equally determined to express its position on a certain number of issues within those intergovernmental organisations that are also active in the field of vocational education. The World Bank has already published a number of studies on the subject while UNESCO organised a World Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (held in April 1999 in Seoul, Korea). The ILO is currently preparing a tripartite debate on general policy between governmental representatives and employers' and workers' organisations, scheduled to take place during the next session of the International Labour Conference in June 2000.

It is therefore vital that education trade unions, individually at the national level, but also collectively at the international level within the framework of EI, express the concerns of teaching personnel within this debate. This is our objective.

Vocational education, like primary, secondary and higher education, lies at the heart of the process of education reform.

Public opinion, managers, parents and young people wish, and rightly so, to see the development of education systems which prepare young people in the best possible way for insertion into economic life. The world of work is becoming ever more international, jobs require more and more new skills, new jobs are constantly appearing which require qualifications of an ever greater technological nature. As a result, vocational training must therefore be rethought, for fear of condemning large numbers of young people to unemployment and in order to demonstrate the current incapability of public education systems to rethink themselves in relation to the new needs and demands of the economy.

The reform of vocational education also features in the wider debate regarding the roles to be played by the public sector and private enterprises in the process of developing, implementing and evaluating new training contents. The debate on this necessary reform of vocational training must also take account of the wider project on life-long learning which the OECD and ILO are currently working on in close collaboration with employers' organisations and workers' trade unions.

Finally, the debate on the necessary reform of vocational education must not overshadow another, equally serious problem: that of the absence of vocational training programmes in the majority of developing countries, countries where the need for specialised workers, technicians and engineers, is very real. This absence of training is most dramatic for young people themselves, who are thereby condemned to unemployment, economic marginalisation and social exclusion. However, this absence of training is equally dramatic in that it does not allow for the continued maintenance of collective equipment, acquired through technical cooperation or actual investments, much of which cannot be effectively realised due to the limited financial means available.

Everyone therefore acknowledges the importance of issues related to vocational training, issues which are, ultimately, real problems of society. It is hoped that this dossier will enable a greater understanding among teaching personnel of the importance of such a debate and the necessity for the trade union movement to take an active role in expressing appropriate objectives and proposals. ◆

Elie Jouen
EI Deputy General Secretary

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	**10-11**
ILO AND UNESCO'S VIEWS	**12 & 16**
LIFE-LONG LEARNING	**13-14**
PARTNERSHIPS	**15**
NATIONAL SITUATIONS	**17-20**
Germany, Gabon, Australia and Honduras	
CHILD LABOUR	**21**

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and training worldwide

When comparing the systems for vocational education and training in different countries, a first conclusion is that there is considerable variety in the way they are organised.

Differences include: whether vocational education and training (VET) is provided mainly at upper-secondary or post-secondary level; whether provision is mainly within the framework of upper-secondary education or through a separate system and whether VET takes place mainly in companies as apprenticeship training or in schools. Moreover, vocational and technical education and training is institutionalised in some countries, while in others there are few or no institutions or regulations.

VET share of all education

The share of VET as a percentage of all education for young people differs greatly between countries. In some cases it is hard to make a clear distinction between what could be regarded as general secondary education and vocational education and training.

The table shows the net enrolment rates for different types of upper secondary programmes for the ages with the highest enrolment in the **OECD countries** and in some others. We find the highest enrolment in vocational and technical programmes in the **Czech Republic** (84%) and the lowest in **Paraguay** (3%). The average enrolment rate for vocational and technical programmes in the OECD countries is 40 % at the age of 17. In many developing countries a very small proportion of all secondary students is enrolled, for example in **Congo** 3 3% and in **Zimbabwe** 2 2%.

The enrolment of girls in VET

Unfortunately there are no international statistics indicating to what extent girls are enrolled in VET. We have some national examples. In **Zimbabwe,** 30% of students in VET are girls, while in the **UK,** 54% are girls. Not unexpectedly, the courses within VET with the highest percentage of girls are courses in subjects that are generally considered to be "female" subjects, such as nursing, fashion, clothing, home science and secretarial studies. At the same time the lowest percentage of girls is found in what could be considered typical "male" courses, such as technical mathematics, military subjects, metal industries and mining.

Apprenticeship

The centre of attention in many of the discussions on vocational education and training is the so-called dual system which exists, for example, in **Germany, Austria** and **Switzerland.** The philosophy of this system is that VET should be closely linked to practice and should take place to a substantial degree in companies. One of the advantages of this system is that vocational training takes place under conditions and on machines and equipment which represent the state of the art. For financial reasons school workshops can seldom afford to have the most modern equipment and machines.

The disadvantage is that the training could be too workplace-specific. If the training is mainly oriented towards the machines, the equipment and the routines of certain work places, the training is of limited value for industries other than the one where the training was received.

In a general sense, all systems for vocational education and training can be seen as dual systems, as they combine theory and practice. The difference lies in how these elements are organised. In most countries there is close co-operation between the private companies providing apprenticeship and the vocational schools.

What qualifications?

Another area of concern when we compare the systems is which general qualifications the students are given. In all systems, at the end of the training students get some kind of certificate allowing them to work in a certain vocation. In many systems there seem to be possibilities to get further training and education for the students. **German** students can continue to Technical School (Fachschulen). The **Norwegian** system stresses the goal that students from all streams of upper secondary education should be able to qualify for higher education. In **Spain,** Institutes for Higher Vocational Education are under construction. In **Slovenia** a large proportion of students from professional schools continue to higher education. In **Sri Lanka** there is a huge variety of diplomas and certificates, but at least those awarded by Technical Colleges seem to give access to higher education.

The advantage of giving the students a qualification allowing them to continue their education in colleges, high schools or universities is obvious. There will be no dead ends in the system and the student can always change her/his mind about education plans. The disadvantages are just as obvious: to receive a more general qualification the students must spend more time studying general subjects, and many students might have applied for vocational training because they preferred not to pursue more general subjects.

What starting age?

Given that VET is more of specialised than general education, a crucial question is when should the student be allowed to choose between a more generally oriented education or a more specific vocational education and training. The **French** students can start their vocational training when they are 14, the **Germans** when they turn 15 and the **Norwegians** at age 16. In **Spain** current educational reforms are moving the starting age from 14 to 16.

An early start will make it possible for students who are tired of mainstream schools to do something else and could prevent them from being drop-outs. A late start to vocational training will give the students more possibilities to think about what they would like to do and to make this choice more independently of their background.

Separate or integrated systems?

As noted at the beginning, the organisational framework of VET may vary significantly. In **Germany**, schools for VET are separate from the schools where upper secondary education takes place. In **France**, there are vocational lycées, technical lycées and general lycées, so there is partial integration. In **Australia** the TAFE colleges have been established as a separate part of the education system. In **Norway** all upper secondary education takes place in the same system, often even under the same roof. In **Slovenia** there are separate schools for general secondary education and different types of vocational and technical education and training. The **Spanish** reforms intend to integrate vocational subjects into general lower-secondary education and then have separate schools for general secondary education and vocational education and training at upper-secondary level. In **Sri Lanka** some elements of vocational education are included in secondary education, but most takes place in separate institutions. In **Congo** some vocational education and training takes place in secondary education, but large parts take place in separate institutions.

Privatisation

Ideas and suggestions on how to privatise education have been widely discussed. International education statistics show that, so far, only minor parts of the education sector have been privatised. Although the statistics do not indicate that there is a large private sector within the education sector in many countries, growing numbers of private institutes offer different types of VET that are not necessarily covered by the existing statistics. VET outside the public sector can be provided by a variety of agencies, institutions and private companies, among them some NGOs and unions.

In most industrialised countries the largest proportion of initial VET is provided within the public sector. In many third world countries VET takes place in several different kinds of institutions, more or less loosely integrated with the educational system. Some institutions might be set up by government agencies, but some are run by NGOs or private enterprises. In **Honduras**, for example, 77% of the vocational schools are run by organisations outside the public sector, in **Congo** 70-75%, whereas in **Sri Lanka** almost all VET is implemented outside the public sector. ◆

NET ENROLMENT RATES FOR THE AGES WITH THE HIGHEST UPPER SECONDARY ENROLMENT

Country	General programmes		Vocational and technical programmes	
	Age	% of all persons enrolled	Age	% of all persons enrolled
Argentina	15	37	17	19
Australia	16	64	18	19
Austria	15	27	16	70
Chile	16	40	16	22
Czech Republic	15	15	16	84
Denmark	18	49	17	25
Finland	16	56	17	36
France	16	46	17	48
Germany	17	25	18	55
Greece	15	73	15	21
Hungary	15	26	15	62
Iceland	16	71	18	20
Indonesia	17	18	17	11
Ireland	16	81	18	21
Japan	15	73	15	28
Jordan	16	45	17	12
Korea	16	55	16	40
Luxembourg	17	26	18	42
Malaysia	15	61	16	8
Mexico	16	25	17	4
Netherlands	16	33	18	48
New Zealand	16	81	17	16
Norway	18	48	17	50
Paraguay	17	25	16	3
Poland	15	29	16	62
Portugal	17	42	17	19
Russia	15	49	17	22
Spain	15	68	17	20
Sweden	16	45	17	65
Switzerland	17	24	18	53
Thailand	16	26	15	23
United Kingdom	14	98	16	44
Uruguay	16	40	18	7

Source: Education at a Glance. OECD Indicators. (OECD, 1998)

Ulf Fredriksson
Education Coordinator

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ILO

On the agenda of the 88th International Labour Conference

The ILO Governing Body has decided to put the item "Human resources training and development: Vocational guidance and vocational training" on the agenda of the 88th Session of its International Labour Conference in June 2000.

http://www.ilo.org

Since its inception, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has fostered vocational guidance and training as being of crucial importance to employment promotion, economic prosperity and social justice. ILO has dealt with vocational education and training (VET) in two ways: by organising different types of vocational training programmes and by adopting recommendations and conventions.

In 1975, the ILO adopted the Human Resources Development Convention (142) and Recommendation (150) which concern vocational guidance and vocational training in the development of human resources. Convention 142 has been ratified by only 57 member States, a rather limited response from member States.

Are present standards accurate?

During the last two decades, critical economic and social phenomena have helped re-evaluate the importance of employment-related training. Training, it is argued, should be regarded as a public asset, an investment as important as physical investment. This affects the conceptual approach to training, its objectives and priorities, and the policies, systems, strategies and programmes that countries adopt. The development of intensified competitiveness, major economic restructuring, atypical employment patterns, profound transformation of work organisation and production, and new and changing job content, are generating increased and diversified skills needs. At the same time fiscal policies, structural adjustment and government reorganisation have resulted in reduced availability of public funds for skills development.

Key areas of training reform are the new roles of the State and the private sector, including a proactive regulatory framework, decentralisation, the development of a training market, and co-ordination mechanisms among the various actors involved; innovative and diversified financing mechanisms, increased responsibilities and participation of enterprises and individuals; the greater involvement and participation of, and new forms of dialogue between the social partners; and the enhanced relationship between training and evolving labour market needs.

What will happen now?

The Workers' Group of ILO's Governing Body has requested the inclusion of vocational training in the portfolio of standard-setting activities. Workers' unions suggest the adoption of a new Convention to supplement Convention 142.

Recommendation 150 is considered to include weaknesses:

- lack of consideration for accelerated economic transformation, organisational changes and social dynamics;
- lack of focus on the impact of training on productivity improvement, an implicit emphasis on government-sponsored training, as opposed to the need to foster greater involvement of the private sector and partnerships between the various actors involved;
- a supply-driven rather than demand-driven approach;
- the lack of any reference to the financing of training, which has become one of the most critical obstacles to more and better investment in skills development;
- silence on the institutional framework of training systems;
- insufficient stress on the role of enterprises and on innovative forms of their involvement in training, the rather passive role attributed to the social partners;
- poor attention to the needs of small and micro-enterprises and the informal sector;
- disregard of the linkages between skills and technology and of the contribution of training to technological transfer and innovation, similar deficiencies regarding environmental issues;
- neglect of particular attention to youth training and the employment prospects of the young;
- scarce attention to the training and retraining of unemployed, redundant and displaced workers, and the insufficient importance given to continuous training for all workers throughout their working lives.

In June 2000 a general discussion will be held on this topic at the International Labour Conference and based on the discussion it will be decided how ILO will continue to work with this issue. ◆

Existing instruments in addition to Convention 142 and Recommendation 150 :

- 140: Paid Educational Leave Convention (1974) and Recommendation 148;
- 159: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (1983) and Recommendation 99;
- 136: Special Youth Schemes Recommendation (1970);
- 138, 122 and 111: Minimum Age Convention (1973); Employment Policy Convention (1964) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958);
- 100: Equal Remuneration Convention (1951) and Recommendation 90;
- 97 and 143: Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) (1949) and Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (1975) and Recommendation 151;
- 107 and 169: Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (1957) and Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989);
- 156: Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (1986) and Recommendation 165; and
- 162: Older Workers Recommendation (1980).

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LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The idea that people will return to study and training throughout their lives encompasses more than job-related education. But the concept is driven most forcefully by changes in the world of work – by the inescapable fact that a single period of vocational preparation can no longer be sufficient for a working lifetime of 35 to 45 years.

Since Jacques Delors popularised the idea of life-long learning just five years ago[1], it has become embedded in the political rhetoric of our time – even in the communiqués of the G8. But there is still a long way to go in order to translate the concept into national policy and practice. Governmental policy makers are just starting to work through the major changes required. The implications for our profession are far-reaching. They require that we engage more than ever before with fellow trade unionists, because all industrial sectors are affected. And they also require that we engage with employers. Here are just some of the issues to be considered. Already, they are part of the debate in the OECD and its member countries. Increasingly, these same issues will come to the fore in developing countries as well, even as they continue their essential drive for general education for all.

Who provides?

There is already a diversity of provision for vocational education and that diversity will increase. Naturally we think first of educational establishments – secondary and post-secondary – notably in France, but also throughout the OECD membership. There is a great deal of education and training within enterprises, beyond the traditional apprenticeship approach seen in countries like Germany. Many countries have a variety of private providers, especially for languages, commercial training and computer courses. In Britain, trade unions are also becoming providers of vocational education for their members.

Who determines the content?

In the first place, the provider. Employers are seeking more say in the setting of course objectives. Interestingly, they now place more emphasis on general objectives such as the development of critical thinking, learning how to learn, and the ability to work in teams. Most large enterprises now have human resource departments that organise in-house training and orient employees towards outside courses, which they then seek to influence.

Who teaches?

In educational establishments, qualified teachers, with experience in the specific fields. In enterprises, teachers may be qualified, but often are not. Other private providers often engage unqualified teaching staff, mostly part-time, and usually with poor pay and conditions.

Who gets access?

Canadian studies show that those who get access to further education and retraining are mostly those who already have a good level of education, and have successfully completed earlier courses. Those who missed out earlier, for whatever reason, tend to have difficulty getting later access, so inequalities increase. Women get markedly less access than men. OECD Education Ministers stated in 1996 that their goal was *making life-long education a reality for all*.[2] But the growing knowledge gap is one of the major challenges to be addressed.

Who gives credentials?

Diplomas and certificates are often defined by public

Canadian studies show that those who get access to further education and retraining are mostly those who already have a good level of education, and have successfully completed earlier courses.

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LIFE-LONG LEARNING

This article provides only an overview, given that national policies and practices are evolving rapidly. TUAC and EI would welcome information and comments from EI member organisations and readers on developments at the national level on the issues mentioned.

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Bob Harris
Chair, TUAC Working Group
on Education, Training and Employment

authorities, but can be determined, as in the United States, by educational establishments. Business and community interests are often represented on bodies that determine these credentials. Trade unions need to be there, too, to represent the interests of employees, and particularly to insist on the portability of recognition for courses completed. As for certificates awarded by private providers, often for short-term courses, the market tends to sort out those that are meaningful from those that are not, in the sense that employers quickly learn to distinguish between them. For employees, however, the risks of unregulated certification are high, because they can invest in courses hoping to improve job prospects and find later that the credentials are worth little. More broadly, the trade unions agenda includes insisting that good vocational education is about personal development too.

Who pays?

This is the big question. In 1998 the OECD secretariat argued that public resources for education had reached their limit and that additional resources for life-long learning would have to come from the private sector and from individuals, through the payment of course fees. The OECD Education Committee modified this position after TUAC[2] and EI pointed out that public financing was necessary on grounds of equity and social cohesion as well as investment in human capital. BIAC,[4] representing the employers, supported our position, adding that small and medium-sized enterprises could not be expected to carry the burden, especially as mobility was increasing. In Sweden, tripartite consultations between government, unions and employers have led to a consensus that the costs of lifelong learning should be met in roughly equal proportions by public authorities, enterprises and individuals.

Partnership and policy

TUAC and EI have argued forcefully that the only way to address all these issues effectively in each country is through a partnership approach – involving government, unions and business. Governments have to involve at least their education and labour ministries and unions must engage their national trade union centres as well as education unions. Such an approach works in Denmark, which has the best record of any OECD country in overcoming youth unemployment. Another positive example is that of Ireland, where the partnership approach has paid off in terms of economic growth. National (or State) legislation can set frameworks for the regulation of standards and credentials, for teacher qualifications, for equitable, non-discriminatory provision and access, and for financing. Detailed policies and practices often need to be worked out on an industry basis or at the level of each enterprise – whether public or private. Special provisions are needed for the unemployed (usually through Labour Ministries) and for employees of small businesses (through 'training banks', for example).

Creative collective bargaining

In an era of diversity, mobility and change, legislation can provide a framework but cannot specify all details. We have argued that creative collective bargaining provides the way forward. It is now common for collective bargaining agreements to include detailed arrangements for further education and training, including provisions to apply in the case of re-structuring. Retraining should be part of any social plan.

Monitoring

OECD's influence on national policy makers is enhanced by its work on educational indicators.[5] EI has been invited to participate in future work on indicators, with the involvement of its national member organisations. Meanwhile OECD has also initiated work on how the knowledge base of an enterprise can be shown in company accounts.

Growth

OECD and G8 communiqués now regularly underline the importance of investment in people and in life-long learning as a key factor in economic growth. In each country there are major issues to be addressed, including the links between general and vocational education, as well as privatisation and globalisation, issues placing vocational education on the front-line. National sovereignty in determining policy risks is confronted increasingly by powerful economic interests.[3] We can also expect rapid growth in the number of teachers employed in vocational education, but their conditions of employment will become more precarious unless we can develop ways of helping them to defend their interests in a new and more uncertain environment. Given the growing diversity of vocational education providers, and the mix of public and private provision, organising the growing numbers of vocational education teachers will present important challenges for education unions. These challenges are similar to those faced by unions in new technology and service industries, and education unions can help to show the way. ◆

1 Delors, J. et al: Education – *The Treasure Within*, report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, UNESCO, 1995

2 Communique of the meeting of the OECD Education Committee at Ministerial level, January 1996

3 TUAC - Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris

4 BIAC – Business and Industry Advisory Committee

5 *See Education at a glance*, published annually by the OECD. While indicators have until now dealt with literacy, mathematics and science, a project entitled DeSeCo (Determination and Selection of Competences) is working on indicators of more general educational outcomes.

Finding a dynamic equilibrium

The development of cooperative relationships, as advocated by EI, can help strike a balance between the educational dimension of schooling and vocational training on the one hand, and the professional dimension linked to activities of production on the other.

Numerous social actors therefore find themselves playing a role in a variety of relations: the State and public authorities; organisations of a productive nature (enterprises, social and public services) and their representatives (employers' organisations and trade union confederations); and training establishments and their representatives, notably teachers' and trainers' trade unions.

New information technologies, together with the new organisation of work and the accelerated renewal of knowledge and skills, force us to ensure that all young people and all adults receive the continuous training, qualifications, knowledge and attitudes which are most likely to help them face their first job and, above all, to enable them to master the continued changes in job content within ever-more flexible and evolving enterprises. Vocational education and training (VET) therefore has a decisive role to play in job and employment security.

Role and function of the State and public authorities

The liberal approach defends the idea that the market is the most appropriate means for regulation: those demanding training, enterprises and individuals, must make profitable investments in training and the suppliers of paid training must operate in competition with one another. The role of the State is then reduced to that of simply controlling the quality of training establishments.

EI and its member organisations defend the idea that VET constitutes a public good, that it has an educational role to play in its own right, and that it must therefore be a carrier of values such as social justice, equality, and economic and social efficiency. As such, VET is an integral part of the public education system to which the State guarantees access without discrimination.

In reality, the public sector generally coexists with the regulated private sector.

Role of the social partners

Standing alongside national, regional or local public institutions, social partners play an important role in developing training content and diplomas, in the control and sometimes even the organisation and financing of VET.

Representatives of salaried workers, notably trade union federations, can gain support from the quality of training and the reliability of the qualifications gained through such training in order to ensure their recognition within the levels of classification they have negotiated within enterprises and professional branches.

Employers, through their participation in consultative and even decision-making organisms, can ensure that the needs of enterprises in terms of work content and the expected capabilities of future employees are taken into account. A system of reliable diplomas provides essential benchmarks for their recruitment policies.

What of teachers and their trade unions?

Whatever the system of regulation, teachers and their trade unions are the bearers of those interests, values and concepts which characterise a wide-ranging and ambitious educational vision of VET. In particular, they contribute to the development of educational content and learning situations which provide the most up-to-date and appropriate training and which achieve the greatest balance between professional and social qualifications. It is also a question of training individuals to be active and creative, and to be critical citizens.

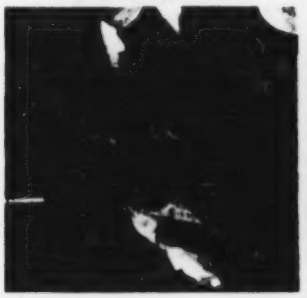
Experience in the workplace

No matter how they are organised, the integration of workplace experience and activities into a training course and into diplomas and certificates must meet a variety of different objectives. The latter can be listed as the discovery of specific practical and theoretical knowledge, the acquisition of capacities for achievement, a sense of responsibility, as well as learning to work in a team. The question is one of finding the best forms of cooperation between enterprises (employers, salaried workers, tutors, etc.) and training establishments (educational teams ...) so that such experiences provide the best possible training and are the most effective for those young people following the training in question.

There is no easy or simple answer to these questions. Each national system of VET, through evolution and reform, seeks to develop these multiple partnerships under very different conditions, according to methods that have been marked by specific national experiences and circumstances.

In any and every case, the objective should be for VET to constitute one of the main factors in the transformation of societies towards greater social justice and greater economic and social effectiveness. ◆

Training has become a decisive condition of job security.



Yves Baunay
SNES National Secretary,
EI Consultant

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UNESCO

Knowledge and skills will fuse

Those entering the world of work in the 21st century will face many new challenges. These will be driven, among others, by the rapid developments in the information and communication technologies (ICTs), the impact of globalisation, and the ever-widening demand for new services. The future world of work will be increasingly knowledge-based and technology-driven. With technology replacing labour, more individuals will shift to self-employment and entrepreneurial activities. These challenges will require them to be flexible in their ability to acquire new knowledge and skills, adapt to constantly changing production processes and function in new work environments.

From the viewpoint of the professional, education and training will be inseparable. Knowledge and skills will fuse. Content will evolve constantly. Conventional levels and classifications will coalesce and regroup around new breakthroughs. The "education chain" will stretch lifelong. A single person will make many demands for education and training over a lifetime.

The Seoul Congress[1] produced a new vision of TVET[2]. This gave to it a centrality of place in the world of tomorrow as the core function preparing and developing the individual for employment and self-fulfilment. Education and training will be twin requirements, providing the required combination of personal abilities, technical knowledge, generic and technical skills, values and attitudes required for each employment situation. The congress recommended that TVET content be introduced in the school curriculum and continue after school. At the same time, technical and continuing education must be incorporated with training in the workplace and be available for self-development. For the individual, lifelong learning would be the 'Bridge to the Future'. For a country, a sound TVET system was an indispensable component of the national development framework.

The congress produced a set of Recommendations captioned *Technical and Vocational Education and Training. A Vision for the Twenty-first Century*[3]. These recommendations constitute the foundation for UNESCO's new programme in TVET, which commenced in January 2000. The programme will pursue three main objectives. They are:

- To strengthen TVET as an integral component of lifelong learning,
- To orient TVET for sustainable development, and
- To provide TVET for all.

The programme actions will work towards achieving these objectives by adopting three distinct modalities. They will consist of *improving Member States' TVET policy-making capacity, assisting Member States in their institutional capacity building and enhancing international cooperation*. In practical terms, UNESCO will conduct meetings, seminars and training workshops for TVET policy- and decision-makers, teacher trainers, teachers and curriculum developers. These activities will be organised and conducted by UNESCO Headquarters and its Field Offices around the world.

In order to promote regional and sub-regional cooperation, UNESCO will confer the title of *Regional Centre of Excellence* on selected TVET institutions and use them for providing training for policy-makers and specialists from neighbouring countries. An *International Prize for Innovation in* TVET will also be awarded every two years to an institution which made successful innovations in its TVET programme to yield demonstrably improved prospects for its alumni.

UNESCO will harness the ICTs to enhance the quality and reach of all its TVET programmes. It will establish International *Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* in Bonn, Germany. This Centre will serve as a repository of TVET information and be the hub of the UNEVOC *Network*. Selected TVET institutions worldwide will be linked through the latter to facilitate information exchange. The Bonn Centre will also maintain a dedicated interactive TVET website which will provide online information and technical assistance support for policy-makers, teachers and other members of the TVET community.

It is hoped this UNESCO programme will help its Member States to construct bridges to a more prosperous future in the new century.

Notwithstanding new methodologies for electronic and distance delivery, the teacher and trainer remain the most vital elements in the TVET processes. It is therefore of momentous importance that Education International has organised this Round Table as a follow up of Seoul. This must be but a beginning – of your assimilation of the New TVET and the exposition and development of your roles. UNESCO will partner you along the road and looks forward to your continued support of its programmes in pursuit of our common endeavour. ◆

Notwithstanding new methodologies for electronic and distance delivery, the teacher and trainer remain the most vital elements in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training processes. The company of "vocational educators" will progressively embrace all those concerned over the education chain.

A. Parsuramen
Director Division for Renovation of Secondary and Vocational Education - UNESCO

1 Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, Seoul April 1999
2 It was at Seoul that ILO and UNESCO agreed to adopt the common term "Technical and Vocational Education and Training". This was included in the congress' Recommendations
3 Recommendation of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education-UNESCO July 1999

The "dual" German model

The high degree of dependence on economic developments of the training system in Germany has become the prime cause of its current crisis.

Germans have always confidently promoted the good reputation of the dual vocational education and training system (VET) implemented in Germany, stressing its advantages:

- The early link with practical experience in the workplace and the smoother integration into the world of work at the end of training.
- The high proportion of young people who have successfully gained qualifications using the system.
- The fact that young people are paid during the training period.
- Co-determination on vocational training by the social partners, including the trade unions.
- The link between vocational education and collective bargaining policy, so that people completing a period of vocational training are entitled to receive collectively agreed remuneration.

In the meantime, voices of dissent have arisen, especially now that the situation has changed radically. Quantitatively, the German dual training system can no longer reliably offer sufficient, wide-ranging training opportunities on a long-term basis. Qualitatively, the variable quality and value of training have become apparent over the past few years.

Alongside the dual training system, there is a wide range of training courses that are college-based or conducted outside the workplace. As a result, the system of VET in Germany has in reality developed into a mixed system comprising different training sectors, characterised by:

- varying acceptance as regards society and employment policy,
- heterogeneous training conditions,
- a lack of transparency and inadequate linkage,
- different quality standards,
- national policies on vocational education and training, and job creation, which largely fail to take account of demand, needs or quality-related aspects.

It is against the present backdrop – a grave crisis in an important sector of education policy –that the debate on the VET reform is taking place. The government has not yet addressed the root of the problem. Essentially, it is continuing its policy of baling out a leaky boat, persevering in the hope that demographic changes will relieve the pressures within five to seven years, by which time the system will function smoothly again.

Initiatives advocated by trades unions

The German trade unions are firm advocates of the dual system. They are seeking to overcome the qualitative failings of the system by reforming it; on the other hand, they also believe that quantitative problems should be addressed by a new system for financing training. At present they are participating in the initiative Bündnis für Arbeit (the Alliance for Work, tripartite talks comprising representatives of the trades unions, employers and the government).

The GEW (education and science trade union Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft), by contrast, has been conducting an intensive debate on this matter for some time. There is a growing belief that the measures employed to date simply do not go far enough.

However, the needed reforms to the German system of initial and continuing vocational training must be guided by the overriding principle of offering the next generation a wide range of training courses leading to improved qualifications. The de facto plurality of the vocational education and training system must be acknowledged and its development consistently furthered, taking account of pre-defined quality standards, the ultimate aim being to create a pluralistic system of VET where individual sectors are considered to be of equal value and interlink effectively.

Such a concept of reform would consist of two elements:

- The dual system of in-company vocational training should be preserved and reformed.
- The dual training system should be systematically supplemented by other courses offering training of an equivalent quality.

There are examples in other European countries of such equivalent parallel structures for training apprentices and for other, college-based, training (e.g. in Austria, where the tradition is comparable to that in Germany). Of course, before such a plural system can be fleshed out, a whole series of tasks would have to be taken on board and problems overcome. ◆

The 1999 figures for apprenticeships show that despite all the measures taken at national level, around 20,000 young people still left school without any qualifications, not taking into account the many people who were "accommodated" in substitute schemes. The German federal government is trying to counteract the failings by implementing a series of measures.

Ursula Herdt
Head of the Vocational Education Department, Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW)

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GABON

Education's neglected sector

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The purpose of vocational training is to give people the knowledge they need to perform a job, adapt to new employment and/or acquire a higher qualification. It also sometimes seeks to help workers re-train and enable young people to enter the labour market. In Gabon, however, it is the education's neglected sector.

Ever since Gabon gained its independence in 1960, the country has suffered from a labour shortage in terms of both quality and quantity. The government opened two training centres at Libreville and Port-Gentil, and enterprises were later obliged to organise refresher training for their own staff. At the same time, the State set up the Agence nationale de formation professionnelle (National Vocational Training Agency) in 1973, and the Ministry of Vocational Training in 1977, with a view to ensuring that proper planning went into this area of training. The new Ministry backed the opening of training centres in the interior of the country, and other establishments were simultaneously funded by the Ministry of Education: these included technical education colleges, technical lycées and, since 1995, professional lycées.

Gabon now has over 36 private and public education and vocational training establishments providing basic and continuing training courses.

The government has a budget of 210 billion CFA francs (320 million US dollar) for the eleven professional establishments, and 900 million CFA francs (1.4 million US dollar) for the five public vocational training centres. On the face of it, these sums appear quite substantial, but given the country's problems, they are paltry; they also come close to a refusal to credit the sector with any importance at all. No investment is forecast, with the result that teaching materials, which are usually inadequate, have been neither renewed nor adapted to developments in new technology.

An analysis of vocational training reveals three shortcomings: the fragility of the system, its ineffectiveness, and the fact that it has not been adapted to the needs of the Gabonese people. This is largely due to the fact that efforts have been mainly directed at setting up inadequate, ill-equipped infrastructures instead of training activities and sound organisation.

The National Vocational and Refresher Training Agency can no longer meet employers' needs, and nearly all vocational training centres in companies are closing down. Worse still, the only school that has attempted to provide agricultural and livestock training has also closed.

Reforms were clearly called for in the light of litany of failures, and in 1990 the State began to give serious consideration to ways of remedying the situation. However, although things remained unchanged at the level of the Ministry of Vocational Training, the reform prompted the Ministry of Education to introduce a broad-based programme of reform in training establishments.

Results since 1995 have been impressive: they include specialisation in two cycles and the conversion of some technical education colleges into professional and industrial lycées that provide training for car mechanics and in vocational skills in the wood sector.

Lastly, like the rest of the education system generally, vocational training in Gabon is undergoing change. This flows not only from political aspirations, but also, and mainly, from a process of democratisation that is taking place in the country and from a trade union campaign for higher educational standards. Like so many other things, we'll believe it when we see it. ◆

Emmanuel Obame Ondo
Syndicat de l'Education Nationale
- SENA - Gabon

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A case of educational convergence

Recent changes to vocational education by the national Government have considerably altered the balance of decision making over vocational education training reforms in favour of industry and business. The VET system has become less educationally focussed and more 'industry driven'.

Vocational education programs are run through an extensive network of publicly funded vocational education and training (VET) institutions called TAFE Institutes. These institutes provide 'second chance' education for school leavers and the unemployed, courses for migrant and refugees, further education for workers seeking to enhance their career opportunities and retraining for those affected by technological changes or industrial restructuring. TAFE also provide non-university course options for school students.

The network of 90 TAFE Institutes enrol nearly 1.7 million students each year or 12% of all 15-64 year olds, and employs nearly 60,000 teaching and allied staff. Courses are offered from pre-trade through trade, advanced diploma and up to sub-degree advanced diploma level.

The medium age of TAFE students is 29 and young people constitute 38% of all TAFE students. Over 56% of TAFE participants are women and there is a high rate of Indigenous student participation. Vocational education course options are becoming popular in secondary schools and university graduates take TAFE courses to acquire 'practical' skills to add to their university qualifications.

Australian qualification system

National and state governments have co-operated in the development of a national qualifications system based on the following broad objectives:

- encouraging greater participation in post-compulsory education for those in work and those seeking work;
- enhancing the role of industry representatives in setting the competency standards required for workplace performance;
- encouraging convergence of general and vocational education; and
- making vocational education and training more accessible to all.

Recent trends

A deregulated training market of public and private VET institutions compete for declining government funds while businesses seek access to government funds through 'user choice' to replace their own training obligations. The changes have impacted widely on TAFE Institutes. As a result most TAFE Institutes have moved towards:

- new operational structures and staffing arrangements;
- competition with industry and other VET Institutions;
- designing more on and off-the-job training programs to meet industry needs;
- flexible delivery of training, including distance and on-line learning;
- more fees for service courses;
- expansion and promotion of vocational education courses overseas.

Quality of VET

Competition for declining government training funds, compounded by the expansion of private VET institutions, has increased pressure on the public TAFE Institutes. Recently a major study of quality of on the job training found that some students trained in the workplace were unaware that training had taken place.

A parliamentary committee found fraudulent practices by employers who had reclassified workers as 'trainees' in order to attract government traineeship funding at the expense of the public TAFE system.

The national government has established an inquiry into the quality of VET. The AEU in its submission has argued for greater regulation of VET Institutions and the development of national quality standards for vocational education and training, including increased funding to TAFE to increase access for students. ◆

TAFE works

In Australia, participation in vocational education and training measured by key equity criteria reflects positively for government funded TAFE Institutes. Student participation rates in terms of age profile, Indigenous enrolments, gender balance, women's participation in non-traditional occupational courses, geographic distribution and socio-economic mix indicate the policies and strategies to achieve equity outcomes from training are beginning to work.

GIRLS IN LEAD FOR TERTIARY PLACES

Girls who take vocational subjects at school are more likely to go on to university or TAFE study than their male counterparts, who are more likely to be offered apprenticeships, suggests an Australian study of nearly 7,500 students who graduated from year 12 in 1997.

The findings, compiled by Melbourne University's Associate Professor Richard Teese, show that one quarter of girls with vocational qualifications enrolled in university, compared with 15.8% of boys. In contrast, 23.2% of boys entered an apprenticeship or traineeship, compared with 11.7% of girls. Of those who left school with vocational qualifications, nine out of 10 boys gained employment as apprentices, while nine out of 10 girls were offered positions as trainees.

More than 9660 students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) in 1997. Information technology was the most popular subject for vocational students, followed by accounting and business management. Students studying vocational subjects favored the more traditional male and female subjects.

However, the proportion of school leavers with vocational qualifications who apply for entry to university and TAFE is significantly lower than for other students. One third of vocational students do not apply for university or TAFE entry, compared with about one fifth of other students. The study found that 20.5% of year 12 VET students enrolled in university, 31.5% went on to TAFE, 17% entered an apprenticeship or traineeship, 13.7% went into work and 5.8% were working part-time.

The 1997 study showed that unemployment rates for school leavers with vocational qualifications had improved from 7.1% to 5.6%.

Rex Hewett
Federal TAFE Secretary
Australia Education Union (AEU)

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HONDURAS

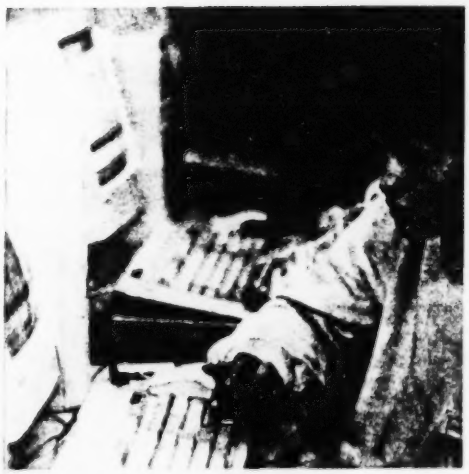
Education system to get complete overhaul

Official technical education in Honduras does not meet current needs because there has been no study aimed at identifying the country's real needs. The system currently being drawn up seeks to address this shortcoming.

Improvements to the Honduran education system, and to technical training in particular, are among the concerns currently facing the country. In November 1994 a National Convergence Forum (FONAC) was set up with a view to examining urgent national problems. They included a reorganisation of the education system.

The FONAC brought together broad sections of civil society and government representatives. The process includes consultation meetings that have been organised at municipal, regional, departmental and national level; these give people an opportunity to voice their opinions not only on the kind of society they want to see developing in the country, but also on the kind of education they want for their children. The viewpoints expressed were analysed by a special commission, which then drew up a proposal-document that will subsequently be turned into legislation. A fairly comprehensive draft is already in existence and will be finalised towards the middle of 2000. At this stage, the document provides for a complete reorganisation of technical training; this will involve giving the sector its own structure, together with precise objectives and a philosophy adapted to its specific needs and characteristics. Consideration is currently being given to the idea of decentralising educational administration into 18 departmental directorates.

All concerned actors – parents, employers, teachers, workers, political and religious leaders, university professors, social actors and many others – are currently involved in restructuring education.



Gloria Marina Chinchilla
secretary with responsibility for external affairs
Primer Colegio Profesional Hondureño de Maestros (PRICPHMA)

Snapshot of the current situation

At the present time, 220 secondary institutions deliver official technical training, that is to say training that leads to a recognised diploma. These institutions employ 10 000 teachers, most of whom have completed their specialist studies at the Francisco Morazán National Teachers' University or at foreign universities.

Of the students enrolled at these secondary schools, about 30 000 every year are awarded a diploma in one of several technical subjects (three years' study after primary schooling), a technical baccalaureate or a primary school teachers' qualification (three years' study after the basic post-primary cycle). Youngsters studying towards a baccalaureate choose from the following options: agriculture, aquaculture, coffee growing, agricultural technical sciences, forestry sciences, ecology and the environment, management, industry, services and information technology. Each of these options in turn includes 8-10 specialist areas, giving a grand total of 70 baccalaureates, all of them enabling successful students to enter the labour market or – and this does not apply to all – go on to study their respective subjects at university. As many as 70% of the institutions offering technical training in Honduras are private; only 30% belong to the public sector.

The National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) was set up in 1972 and is the most important organisation dealing with the non-formal education sector. It aims to direct vocational training policies that are designed to stimulate the country's economic and social development in all branches of economic activity, by providing Honduran workers with the skills they need to cope with the demands of modern society. The INFOP trains young people from the ages of 15 to 23 in over 50 specialist areas of industry, agriculture and the tertiary sector. It is mainly financed by subsidies from the central government, the funds of private enterprises and international loans, and is therefore completely free.

Additionally, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contribute to technical training through training courses and advice, and mainly in the fields of agriculture, industry and general housekeeping.

Two State universities and six private universities also provide higher education technical training. The National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) offers over 20 technical courses in all subjects. Also of interest is the private Technological University of Central America (UNITEC), which is best known for its courses in marketing, information technology and management. It works closely with the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Studies) in Mexico.

Both the government and civil society are fully aware that, at a time when extraordinary technological changes are taking place, the main challenges posed by global competition can only be successfully met if appropriately skilled human resources are available. ◆

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CHILD LABOUR

• UNDP

In the debate on child labour and how best to provide education for children denied access to schooling because they are at work, technical vocational education is a central issue.

The debate on child labour and education has gone full circle. Many believed that the provision of technical skills to child labourers to improve their skills for the local job market was what should be provided and, if a couple of hours here and there could be devoted to teaching these youngsters to read and count, that was an added bonus. It is now realised that this will never make any real change in the situation of child labourers.

If education is to respond to the problem of child labour and be an important part of the solution, innovation and non-traditional techniques will have to be incorporated into the education system.

Examples of good practice used in communities where child labour is prevalent to retain or bring children into school show that a good quality education programme, whether at primary or secondary level, that includes a well structured technical vocational component works well. Children and parents alike appear to see the skills training as a valuable part of education.

In Egypt, "one-room, multi-grade, community-based schools" target girls who were not in school, combining academic skills, life and technical skills – albeit the skills traditionally expected of girls. Based on the successful development of more than 200 community schools in Upper Egypt, the Education Ministry currently supports over 2 000 small schools throughout the country that emphasise vocational as well as academic training at the primary level.

In the Caribbean, where boys constitute the biggest drop-out problem from school, non-formal education projects that include a technical vocational component as well as teaching academic and life skills are reporting success.

Gender sensitive education plays an essential role in encouraging both girls and boys to stay in school. As can be seen in the Caribbean and as is now being noted in some parts of Africa, boys are not performing as well as girls in school and increasingly are dropping out and taking on unskilled work. In other parts of the world, girls still are in the minority and much remains to be done to ensure that the education provided meets their needs. This applies equally to technical vocational education and academic studies.

Concern must also be expressed about the provision of technical vocational education in the developing world. The gap continues to grow between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' as far as new technology is concerned. The programmes that have been developed in the formal education system as well as in many non-formal education projects teach traditional skills to young people. The children of the developing world also deserve, as part of their right to education, access to the technology that will help them prepare to work in the knowledge society.

Education and child labour interact profoundly. The type of education provided plays a role in whether pupils and students stay in school. While technical vocational education has an important role to play in this regard, it must not, however, be seen as education suitable only for the children of the poor or to encourage school drop-outs to return to school. Quality education requires that all students receive some form of technical, vocational education. If young people are to make informed choices about career options they obviously must be provided with the opportunity to experiment and explore all aspects of education. •

Sheena Hanley
Deputy General Secretary

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Reconstruction must begin in each area

"We want our children, our brothers and our sisters to be educated. We have been crying out for this. We need immediate assistance."

These were the words of Muctarr M. Ialloh, the eloquent young leader of the 1,800 inhabitants of a Médecins Sans Frontières refugee camp in Freetown, Sierra Leone. At the end of November 1999 M. Ialloh was one of the 374 children and adults in the camp who had been mutilated by rebels. He had had an arm hacked off. He introduced the Education International (EI) and Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) delegation[1] to others who had lost both arms, an arm and a leg or both legs. Children, little more than babies, had not been spared, nor had a young, pregnant woman now forced to face motherhood without arms.

Victims of atrocities, described by United Nations Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson as the worst imaginable. Muctarr and his fellow amputees know that getting an education provides their only possible hope for a decent future. Yet eight years of civil war, a product, according to SLTU President Festuse Minah, of 30 years of mismanagement and corruption and exacerbated by outside interference in Sierra Leonean affairs, has left the educational system in tatters, the economy shattered.

"Over half the 21,500 primary and secondary school teachers are either displaced or refugees. 791 primary schools and 63 secondary schools have been totally destroyed or severely damaged", reported Davidson Kuyateh, SLTU Acting General Secretary.

The challenges facing both the union and the education system in Sierra Leone are immense. The supply of even a minimal level of teaching and learning materials still has to be achieved; reconstruction and refurbishment of schools is required in every region of the country; teachers and support staff salaries are being paid, but not yet on time. For the union, a further urgent priority is the repatriation and resettlement of the teachers still in refugee camps or displaced internally. Schools will not be rebuilt and opened without teachers and the teachers need short-term support to help them re-establish themselves in their villages and communities.

The SLTU has shown its commitment and capacity and it is grateful for the support from Education International and its member organisations over the past troubled decade. But now that support is more important than ever as teachers, their union, their communities struggle to entrench peace and build a decent future for their children.

Operation 'No-Living Thing'

At the SLTU's invitation, an EI mission went to Sierra Leone in November 1999 to assess the situation. The SLTU wanted to discuss how best EI and its members could support the fragile peace over the crucial months ahead. Because of the security situation, travel outside Freetown was limited to the Southern and Eastern Regions.

"The menace of the war left both living and non-living things unspared," said Abudulai Koroma, the SLTU chairperson for the Kenema District in the Eastern Region. *"The killing, maiming, raping and destruction of property, including the demolition of buildings, became the order of the day. Boys and girls aged between eight and fifteen years were forcefully conscripted to serve as fighters, or workers, or wives. The aged and infirm were murdered in cold blood. This was code-named 'Operation No-Living Thing'. In the process, schools were vandalised and many teachers were killed. The fate of teachers behind rebel lines is still not known. Others are refugees in Guinea and Liberia, anxiously waiting to return after disarmament."*

Koroma described how his region was once rich and prosperous because of its diamonds and gold, as well as cash crops like coffee and cocoa. Today it is in ruins with whole districts reduced to rubble, vast plantations reclaimed by the bush, whole communities forced to flee, while those who remained faced hunger and starvation.

An extraordinary sense of hope

Principals and school representatives from every school in Kenema reported that their schools were without furniture, curriculum materials, visual aids, libraries and science laboratories. They despaired at the poor sanitary conditions in schools with no proper toilets or safe drinking water. Yet they were determined to do all they could with the little they had for the children who had been traumatised, injured, often orphaned by the civil war. Already they were beginning the daunting process of integrating into the schools and tertiary colleges some of the children and young people who had actively participated in the killings and mutilations.

In Bo, the EI team visited classrooms with between one and two hundred children crowded onto benches and crouched on the floor. The refugee camp school on the edge of the town had few pencils, little chalk, hardly any writing tablets or exercise books. In some places refugees had no alternative but to use school furniture for firewood. In others the rebels had deliberately vandalised and looted. In Bo, even those schools that had escaped direct damage had pitifully few resources.

Yet such is the desire for education that schools had opened wherever they could for the 1999 - 2000 academic year.

Unions at the forefront of the struggle for democracy

The SLTU, its leaders and members, working closely with the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, have been at the forefront of the struggle for democracy and peace

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[1] From 22-29 November 1999, a small Education International (EI) investigatory mission went to Sierra Leone at the invitation of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU). Members of the team were Regional Coordinator Emmanuel Fofana and Coordinator for Trade Union and Human Rights Rosslyn Noonan. The EI team was also able to meet with teachers in one of the many refugee camps in Guinea. The aims of the mission were • to assess the impact of civil war on the education system and the SLTU; • to identify how best EI and its member organisations can support the fragile peace that now exists; • to develop specific proposals and priorities with the SLTU for immediate and long-term action.

The EI delegation

throughout the 1990s. They promoted civic education, campaigned for a democratic constitution, joined with other groups in civil society in pressuring the then military regime to hold elections.

For the elections in 1996, the union was asked by the Interim National Electoral Commission to conduct a pilot voter registration drive. Despite the many difficulties, this was so successful that the union was then requested to undertake nation-wide voter registration. The women's wing of the SLTU, led by chairperson Catherine L. Kamara, played a crucial role throughout the election processes and joined with other women's groups in strongly and consistently supporting the holding of elections.

SLTU members were understandably proud of their contribution to the inauguration of a democratically elected government in March 1996. But that government had been in office for little more than a year before a coup by the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) working closely with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels.

The teachers' union and the Labour Congress were the first to denounce the coup, urging the junta to relinquish power to the legitimate government. Other civic groups soon joined the struggle. With mounting popular resistance and with assistance from UN ECOMOG troops, the democratically elected government was reinstated in March 1998. But peace was short lived. In November 1998, the SLA and RUF launched fresh assaults throughout the country and entered Freetown in a frenzy of violence on 6 January 1999.

Because of their sustained opposition to the junta, SLTU leaders, activists and teachers as a group were a particular target of the rebels. The extent of their courage and principled actions were commented on by traditional leaders, government administrators, ordinary people wherever the EI team went in Sierra Leone. A mark of the respect in which the leadership of the union is held can be seen in the invitation to SLTU Secretary General Alpha Timbo to join the National Unity Cabinet as one of two representatives from the civil society groups who worked so hard for the restoration of democracy. With support of the union, Alpha Timbo has accepted the position of Minister of Labour, Social Security and Industrial Relations. Both he and the SLTU count amongst his responsibilities a careful monitoring of the implementation of the Peace Accord to ensure full disarmament throughout the country.

Even as civil war raged and the SLTU worked for peace and democracy, the union never lost sight of its prime purpose: representing the interests of Sierra Leonean teachers and access to a quality education for every child and young person. Amongst their most notable gains were the negotiation of the first collective agreement for teachers in 1996 and a very significant salary increase in September 1998. The union has been at the forefront of the campaign for free compulsory education and counts amongst its successes the restored government's adoption of a policy of free education starting this year, despite all the difficulties.

The union itself has suffered destruction of its regional offices and loss of its transport. Regional leaders as well as the National Executive members stressed the importance of getting union membership training programmes underway. They recognised that nothing can be achieved without an informed and active membership and for that well-trained school representatives and effective communications are essential. Catherine Kamara was convinced of the value of leadership training for the women's wing leaders and stressed the need to give even greater priority to upgrading the qualifications of the 40% of teachers, almost all women, who have no formal teacher training.

Sierra Leone is now rated by the UNDP as one of the two least developed countries in the world. The United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Sierra Leone for the Year 2000 amounts to just under $US 80 million. Among the contributions that EI members can make to peace in Sierra Leone is direct assistance through the EI Solidarity Fund[2] to the SLTU and the lobbying of governments to ensure that the UN is able to find the $US80 million required for critical assistance in the health, agriculture and education sectors. ◆

Some have lost their right arm, others both arms, an arm and a leg or both legs (Médecins Sans Frontières refugee camp in Freetown).

Kristin Norman
Human and Trade Union
Rights Coordinator

2. The International Solidarity Fund managed by EI accepts donations in all currencies. Donations can be made by bank transfer to BBL account no. 310-1006170-75, Bd Anspach 157, B-1000 Brussels.

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Structural adjustment and education reforms: Ghana as a case study

In order to find out more about structural adjustment and education reforms, EI has undertaken a case study of Ghana in co-operation with its member organisations GNAT and TEWU, with the financial support of Lärarförbundet Sweden.

Ghana has followed a policy of structural adjustment since 1983, including devaluation of the national currency (the Cedi), a flexible exchange rate, liberalisation of trade policies, reduction of government expenditure, withdrawal of subsidies and price control, and privatisation and/or liquidation of state enterprises. During the same period, Ghana has received loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank corresponding to US $ 200 to 300 million a year.

The main achievement of the present economic policy has been the Gross National Product (GNP) growth and infrastructure development. The GNP growth in 1995 was 4.5%. Nevertheless, the GNP per capita is lower than what it used to be in the 70's. The number of employees in the formal sector of the economy, both private and public, has decreased. A crucial question is the extent to which the growing number of people who work as self-employed in the informal sector can really earn their living.

There are signs that the government has started to realise the need to consult civil society and that sustainable reforms have to be based on dialogue and support.

Education reforms and challenges

As a part of the structural adjustment program, Ghana has also introduced education reforms. The main features of the education reforms have been to shorten the cycle of primary and secondary education to 12 years in total, curriculum changes and decentralisation. The reform package referred to as FCUBE (Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education) focuses on basic education.

The main achievement of the education reforms has been to increase school enrolment. The falling trend of enrolment of the 1980's has ultimately been reversed. Although enrolment has increased, girls are still enrolled to a lesser extent than boys. The challenge now facing Ghana is to continue to increase the enrolment in spite of a population growth rate of 3% a year, which will make it more and more costly just to keep the present enrolment level.

The improvement of the quality of education is critical. According to the results from annual Criterion Reference Tests in English and Mathematics, the present standard of education in Ghana is poor.

The whole structural adjustment program in Ghana was introduced without any consultation of the civil society. The lack of consultation prior to the education reforms created frustration and alienation among teachers and educational workers.

The Ghana Education Service Council was restored in 1995. The new piece of legislation vests so much power in the Minister of Education that he may issue directives in writing to the Council on matters of policy and the Council must comply.

There are signs that the government has started to realise the need to consult civil society and that sustainable reforms have to be based on dialogue and support. However, many steps still have to be taken to get away from the "culture of silence" which has been dominating political life in Ghana for a long time.

Union strategy

The unions in the education sector must show their concerns about the development of the education system. Improved working conditions can only come about in conjunction with general improvements in the education system. For the unions organising teachers and education workers, this means that it is necessary to define a long-term programme which will show the direction of future education policies in the country and indicate strategies to improve the working conditions of the employees in the education sector. A significant part of such a programme must be a vision of how quality education for all can be achieved.

Financing education

A critical element in a vision to achieve education for all is how to finance education. It has to be accepted that public funding is the only long-term strategy for achieving the goal of quality education for all. Income tax is the easiest and most reliable way for governments to get an assured income. International comparisons show that Ghana has a level of taxation revenue that is relatively lower than in many industrialised countries. There are obvious problems in achieving a tax collection sys-

A critical element in a vision to achieve education for all is how to finance education. It has to be accepted that public funding is the only long-term strategy for achieving the goal of quality education for all. © EI

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The Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah monument, also called Independence Square. The memorial "heart" of Accra is largely the legacy of Ghana's first president after independence.
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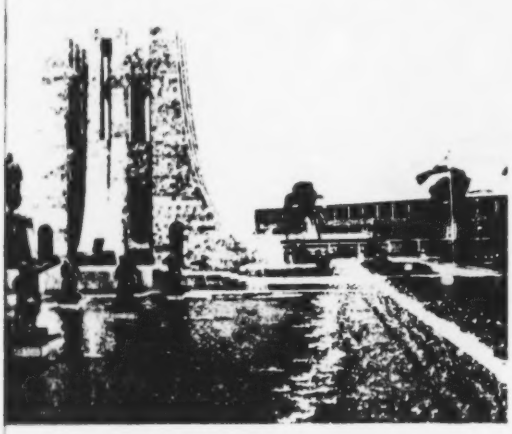

tem that works. The risk is that the whole taxation burden will be carried by employees and workers in the formal sector. A complement to a formal taxation system could be a system under which citizens contribute material and work for the construction of schools, the manufacture of school furniture and other facilities relevant to education through their local community.

By international standards, Ghana is spending a fairly high proportion of its national budget on education but, from an international perspective, only a comparatively small part of total GNP is allocated to education. These figures suggest that Ghana could give higher priority to education by moving closer to the international average for public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GNP. To achieve this, it is necessary to increase public sector revenue, but there are limited possibilities within the framework of the present national budget. The biggest item in the budget since 1994 is the payment of interest on public debt. If this cost could be reduced through international agreements, the government would be able to allocate more to education if indeed it considers that sector a priority area.

Many issues concerning the financing of education could be dealt with in Ghana itself, particularly with regard to increasing the income of the government in order to make it possible to increase investment in education. It is necessary to achieve an agreement at the international level that will slow the pace of repayments of international loans and set a limit on how large a part of the national budget can be used for the repayment and servicing of loans.

Most Ghanaians find it difficult to make ends meet. Harsh measures have often been defended as necessary in order to improve the economic situation in the long-run. It will be difficult to argue for a continued structural adjustment policy if there is no visible improvement for people in general.
© EI

Quality alliance

To improve the working conditions of teachers and education workers, it is necessary to discuss seriously with the government what the employees in the education sector can do in order to increase enrolment figures and improve the quality of education. At the same time what the government can do to help teachers and workers in education to improve their work also has to be discussed. Obviously, there is a need to improve salary levels and to improve teacher education and in-service training.

At the same time, there is also a need to improve 'quality awareness' and responsibility among the teachers. Through joint discussions, it should be possible to establish a programme which will enable teachers and workers in education to do a better job and improve the working conditions. ◆

GHANA

Population (1996)	17.8 million
Average annual population growth (1990 - 1996)	2.9%
Outstanding external debt (1995)	US $ 5.874 million
External public debt as percentage of GDP (1997)	92%
Paying interest on public debt as percentage of the Government expenditure (1996)	24%
GNP growth (1995)	4.5%
GNP per capita (1997)	US $ 390
Inflation (1997)	21%
Unemployment (1995)	21%
Gross enrolment rate (%) in primary education (1999)	79%
Gross enrolment rate (%) in junior secondary schools (1996)	59%
Gross enrolment rate (%) in senior secondary schools (1996)	18%
Gender parity in primary schools (1999)	0.91
Gender parity in junior secondary schools (1999)	0.78
Percentage of students reaching Mastery level in the national criteria reference testing in English (1997)	6.2%
Percentage of students reaching Mastery level in the national criteria reference testing in Mathematics (1997)	2.7%
Expenditure on education as percentage of the government expenditure (1996)	18.6%
Public expenditure on education as percentage of GNP (1992)	3.1%

John Nyonyobe,
Research Officer, GNAT
Alfred Fumador,
Research Officer, TEWU
& Ulf Fredriksson,
Education Coordinator, EI

The final report of the EI study will be published soon.

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Chunkyojo: transition from opposition group to negotiating union

International trade union delegates demonstrating their solidarity with Korean education union Chunkyojo

Lee Dong Jin, Vice President of the Korean education union Chunkyojo

Dong-Jin Lee can at last breathe a sigh of relief. The Vice President of the South Korean education union Chunkyojo in charge of international affairs may proudly announce that the legalisation of his organisation signals the end to the pressure that Chunkyojo has had to endure for so many years. '*I want to thank all education unions and EI for everything they have done for us.*'

'We still have some way to go just look about you. Organise the smallest demonstration, and the government ensures there is a massive police presence on the streets. Trade union recognition is only one of the reforms needed in Korea. We need to consolidate our freedom now, and to do that, we believe that international cooperation is still vital. EI's support has been a great boon in the past. We have no doubt that this cooperation will continue in the years to come.'

Lee Dong Jin, Vice President of the Korean education union Chunkyojo

Wouter Van Der Schaaf, Education Corporation Secretary

South Korea has a long tradition of dictatorial governments. Authoritarian regimes would be followed by military regimes, opposition leaders would disappear while in prison, and trade unions that so much as whispered a word of criticism would be subjected to intolerant repression.

Since the Chunkyojo education union was founded in 1989, it has played an active part in articulating demands for reform. The reaction of the South Korean government has always been immediate, fierce and inflexible. Over 1,800 teachers who openly dared to join the Chunkyojo were summarily dismissed – as a warning to others. Teachers who wanted to organise could do so in a union that was recognised by the State, but would focus only on teaching matters, and not at all on pay demands.

For Chunkyojo, the 1990s meant permanent, semi-clandestine opposition. Officially, the union had no members. But everywhere in the country education personnel met to organise: for example, they discussed the democratisation of education, and studied the possibility of developing new courses and of modernising learning methods. Pay talks with the government were still a long way off.

In the meantime, Lee Dong-Iin, a French teacher before his dismissal, often visited Europe, tirelessly arguing the case of Korean teachers. Education International actively supported the Korean union, which was still banned at the time, and ensured that Korea remained high on the agendas of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Labour Organisation, and other organisations such as the OECD. The unrestricted recognition of trade union rights was seen as a sine qua non of Korea being accepted on the international stage.

Nowadays, Lee Dong-Iin and the Dutch teachers' trade union centre AOb are drawing up a cooperation project with EI and the Australian union AEU. This will enable the Chunkyojo to have a trade union representative in every school; resources will also be made available for training courses and trade union recruitment campaigns.

'*The project has been a huge success*,' says Lee. '*We have been able to get things moving thanks to support from abroad. It would not have been possible otherwise. What is more, the timing was perfect because the tide has begun to turn in the last few years.* Free elections handed victory to the former opposition leader, Kim Dae Jung, and this has changed the political climate considerably. Korea has also undergone a financial and economic crisis, and democratic reforms have led to the granting of foreign aid. The legalisation of the Chunkyojo should be seen in this context.'

The first year 'out in the open' coincided with a massive increase in the number of teachers joining: membership now stands at 70,000, and it will rapidly grow to about 150,000, that is to say half of all primary and secondary teachers. 1999 was also a year of transformation: from being an opposition group, the Chunkyojo has now become a union that takes its seat at the negotiating table, where it has to reach agreements and take its responsibilities seriously. '*We still need to get used to this shift*,' Lee explains. '*Moreover, we have to explain to many of our members what the role of a trade union is, and what our intentions are. For ten years, we were portrayed by the government as radicals who had no idea of what an agreement was. Many teachers have been influenced by this image, and still hesitate about joining.*' ◆

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Why a website is not an online magazine

Trade union websites, including those of teachers' unions, are about to enter their third generation.

Admittedly, many unions do not yet have websites. This is particularly true in the developing countries and at local and regional level in the developed countries.

Many unions now do have websites, but these are often simple, first generation sites, what have been called "online brochures". Most trade unions made their first steps on the Internet with such simple websites, unchanging adaptations of existing text (and sometimes photos) about the union, presented in digital format. Sometimes these were left unchanged for months and even years, and became virtual monuments.

Second generation trade union sites have been more sophisticated and resemble magazines or newspapers much more than brochures. Information is updated on a regular basis. Indeed sometimes, this is done by copying the text and photos of union publications to the web. These sites give visitors a reason to return as there might be something new to see.

But, even now we can imagine the next generation of website emerging, one in which the differences (already apparent) between a magazine and a website come into play.

How is a website different from a magazine?

For one thing, it doesn't cost more money to have more text on a website. This allows websites to go into a kind of depth that magazine editors can only dream about.

Linking to other resources, internal or external, is infinitely easier on a website. In a magazine article, you can refer readers to a pamphlet or article or even a website, but in a website, you can make such reference links. Readers are only a click away from more information.

The printing and distribution costs of magazines are extremely high, which means that unions are sometimes obliged to limit circulation of some publications when ideally every member would receive them, or publish quarterlies when monthlies would be more appropriate. On the net, having more readers doesn't add to the cost. In fact, the opposite is the case. The more readers visit a website, the more valuable the site becomes.

The very idea of a website being updated quarterly or monthly sounds strange. In reality, websites tend to be updated continuously, as information flows in, and not according to production schedules. Forward-looking unions are already allowing the updating of sites by a wide range of individuals, each working in their own field, rather than being dependent upon a single webmaster or a small staff, as was the case when unions first set up sites.

Websites allow a much greater degree of reader involvement than magazines. The best a magazine can offer is a letters to the editor column, often limited by space, with letters appearing long after the articles they refer to have been forgotten. The web allows instant responses, published automatically, and the possibility of exchanges.

Finally, using scripts hosted on web servers and a tool called "cookies", it is possible to create an individual experience for each person visiting a website which is unique, something unthinkable with a magazine. When a teacher visits his/her union's website, it should be able to recognize who he is, and should deliver a specially constructed page filled with information which he/she will find useful, some of which she may have chosen herself. At the very least, websites should take into account that people speak different languages and live in different regions and should be able to deliver different content to meet different needs.

But do education unions really need the latest, bleeding-edge technology? Isn't it enough to put the text of the union's magazine online with a few press releases to keep the site up to date? Not really. The union's website competes for the attention of teachers who have millions of other sites to choose from. Commercial and government sites are already beginning to take on the characteristics of third-generation websites. To do our job, our sites will have to be just as good. ◆

UNION WEBSITE OF THE THIRD GENERATION WILL:

- include personalisation, delivering a unique experience to each visitor
- be rich in content and links
- be updated continuously as necessary and not according to fixed schedules
- be interactive, allowing readers to add their own comments and open up discussions with other readers as well as editors and writers
- be maintained by groups rather than individuals

Eric Lee
ICT Coordinator for Labour and Society International
Editor of the LabourStart website
http://www.labourstart.org

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Aimée, the teacher from Tahiti

How are the teachers in paradise faring? A meeting with Aimée, a teacher on the atoll of Manihi, French Polynesia.

If there is one lost region remaining on Earth, it must be French Polynesia. Nestling in the heart of the Pacific Ocean, this French Overseas Territory is eight hours from Los Angeles, five hours from New Zealand, and fully 20 hours from Europe. Tahiti is the main island, but the territory covers an area the size of Europe. To reach Manihi, an atoll of some 700 inhabitants in the Tuamotu Archipelago, you take a small plane for the two-hour journey to Papeete, the capital of Polynesia, and from the airport, a further fifteen minutes by boat are needed to get to the only village on the atoll, Paeua, which is on an island 1.5km by 200m. That is where you will find Manihi's only shop and two schools: one houses the nursery and the primary school, and the other teaches the first two years of secondary education. For higher levels of education, children have to board at a school on the Atoll of Rangiroa (30 minutes away by plane) or in Papeete.

Aimée Utia is well known in Manihi. She has been teaching the atoll's future generations for the last 20 years. *I have been a teacher since 1972*, she explains. *Before that, I worked as a secretary in Tahiti, and then I heard about a recruitment competition for teachers to work on the Tuamotu Archipelago. I did well in the competition, but as I did not have a teacher's diploma, I did a year's training before I was sent to Tatakoto, an island of 112 inhabitants with only two teachers. I stayed there for seven years, and then asked to be transferred to an island a little nearer to Tahiti. That's how I came to Manihi, after a short stay in Arutua. I immediately fell in love with this little atoll, and I decided there and then to spend the rest of my days here. It's so peaceful, there is no insecurity – and the beach is only a stone's throw from my house!*

Parental involvement

Aimée has 26 pupils in her class. Most are from Paeua, but some of them come by boat every day with their parents who work on the pearl farms not far from the school. One pupil lives on a farm at the far end of the atoll, some 20 kilometres from the village – far too great a distance to travel every day. To make sure that her son attends school, his mother lives with him in Paeua from Monday to Friday in a house belonging to her family – she does the housework and the shopping in exchange for their keep – and goes back home every weekend with her son to be with her husband. *Polynesians are very keen on their children staying at school until the end of their primary schooling*, says Aimée. *We ask parents to send their children to the nursery from the age of three, because we find it difficult to integrate the ones that don't come until they're five. This year, I had three pupils who enrolled later than the others, and it was really hard work bringing them up to the same level.*

At the age of 48, Aimée enjoys her work as much as ever. *I love the children. I love to pass my knowledge on to them and prepare them for a good education. I teach them the basics of geometry and mathematics. I explain life on the Tuamotu islands to them and the resources that we have, and I try to pass on an appetite for reading. All the teaching is done in French, except for songs which are in Tahitian, the language that most of the pupils speak at home.* Education is free, and thanks to financial aid from France and from the Mayor's Office in Paeua, there are no shortages of materials. For exceptional activities such as painting, photos and festivals, parents are asked to make an annual contribution of 1000 francs pacifique (about 8 $US).

Up with the lark

Polynesians time their day by the sun. It comes as no surprise, then, to find people up and about at 5.00 in the morning and starting work at 6.00. Classes in Aimée's school start at 7.00 and finish at midday, except on Tuesdays when they have additional afternoon lessons from 1.00 to 5.00. Even though they have to prepare lessons for the next day, teachers have plenty of spare time. Aimée uses this time looking after the house and educating her two youngest children. One of her sons, a fine-looking young man who has gone into the pearl trade business, lives in a house behind Aimée's; she helps him from time to time with the bookkeeping.

Aimée is happy in her work. She is a member of a trade union, although she cannot remember what it is called. *We call it "the union of the instits"* (an abbreviation of institu-teur/institutrice or teacher), she says. Because of the considerable distances between the islands, the unions are fairly inactive outside Tahiti. It would also appear that with a decent salary and good working conditions, teachers on the islands (for people in Papeete, everything outside Tahiti is an 'island') have no great demands. And the surroundings are mouth-watering: sun all the year round, a blue transparent sea, a tiny school that lacks for nothing, and the smiles of the children. ◆

WHAT IS TO BE DONE ABOUT PUPILS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL?

School is compulsory for all children in Polynesia up to the age of 16. On the islands far from Tahiti, the law exists only on paper, and pupils sometimes leave school before the end of their primary schooling to work with their fathers in the exploitation of pearls and copra. According to the Head Teacher of a local school, only six out of ten school-age children on the island of Ahe near Manihi are enrolled in a school.

Opinions are divided as to what should be done about this. On the one hand, those who favour a strict interpretation of the law think that parents who do not send their children to school should be dealt with severely, for example by withdrawing their family benefit; on the other hand, those who believe that most pupils who drop out of school were not keeping up with their lessons anyway, or were simply not interested, and that they were holding their classmates up. The latter group point to the small number

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Aimée Utia, the teacher with her pupils in the school on the atoll of Manihi, French Polynesia.
© S. Grumiau

of schools specialising in low achievers, and that the few that do exist are located solely in Tahiti, in other words hundreds of kilometres from their families. The family break-ups that occur when a child goes to boarding-school on another island are another reason why children drop out at a young age. Furthermore, rumours are rife on the islands of the bad influences, for example drugs, to which young people studying on Papeete are exposed.

Many parents, who never travelled very far to school themselves, have difficulty in seeing how a baccalaureate might help their children in their lives on an atoll, as you will often hear in the Tuamotu Archipelago. At least if he stays in the bosom of the family, he can learn a trade that will be useful to him in the years to come. Public opinion also criticises secondary school teachers, many of whom come from Metropolitan France, for taking insufficient interest in the education of young Polynesians, or of not adapting their courses and teaching methods to local needs. What is more, lessons are given in French, a language that many Polynesian children do not speak well. These factors go some way towards explaining why so few native Polynesians pass the secondary level diploma. Most white-collar jobs go to French people who are living temporarily in Polynesia or were actually born there. It is a situation that angers many Tahitians.

Some children in Polynesia, it is true, drop out of school to work with their parents, but it does not apply to many; the phenomenon is mainly to be found in the most remote islands, which are also the most thinly populated. However, as most work is carried out in a family environment, after primary schooling has been completed, and in fairly safe conditions, the amount of child exploitation is not comparable to what is found in India and Pakistan. The small number of children at work and the light duties they are asked to perform are clearly the reasons why people in Tahiti discuss the matter so little. Indeed, many people even deny that there is an issue at all. ◆

Samuel Grumiau
Journalist

EI policy on child labour believes that all children should be in school during the period of compulsory education. To deny a child the right to education is to limit the child's options. Rather than simply turn a blind eye, EI recommends the implementation of changes in the education system so that it meets the children's needs.

The atoll of Manihi, French Polynesia.
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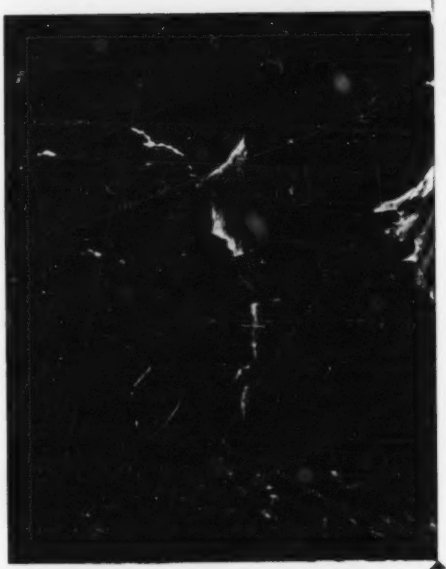

Adolphe, Aimée's son is in the pearl trade business. Aimée's helps him from time to time with the bookkeeping.
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An homage

to the world's most important job:
14 stamps issued on
World Teachers' Day 1999

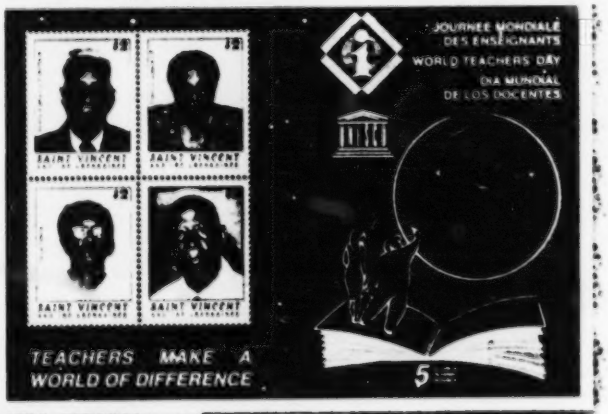
Un hommage

au métier le plus important au monde:
les 14 timbres de
la Journée mondiale des enseignants 1999

Un homenaje

al trabajo más importante del mundo:
14 sellos por el Día Mundial de los Docentes 1999

Information/información:
http://www.ei-ie.org/phila.htm



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